BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

GANESH SHANKAR VIDYARTHI

DR. M.L. BHARGAVA

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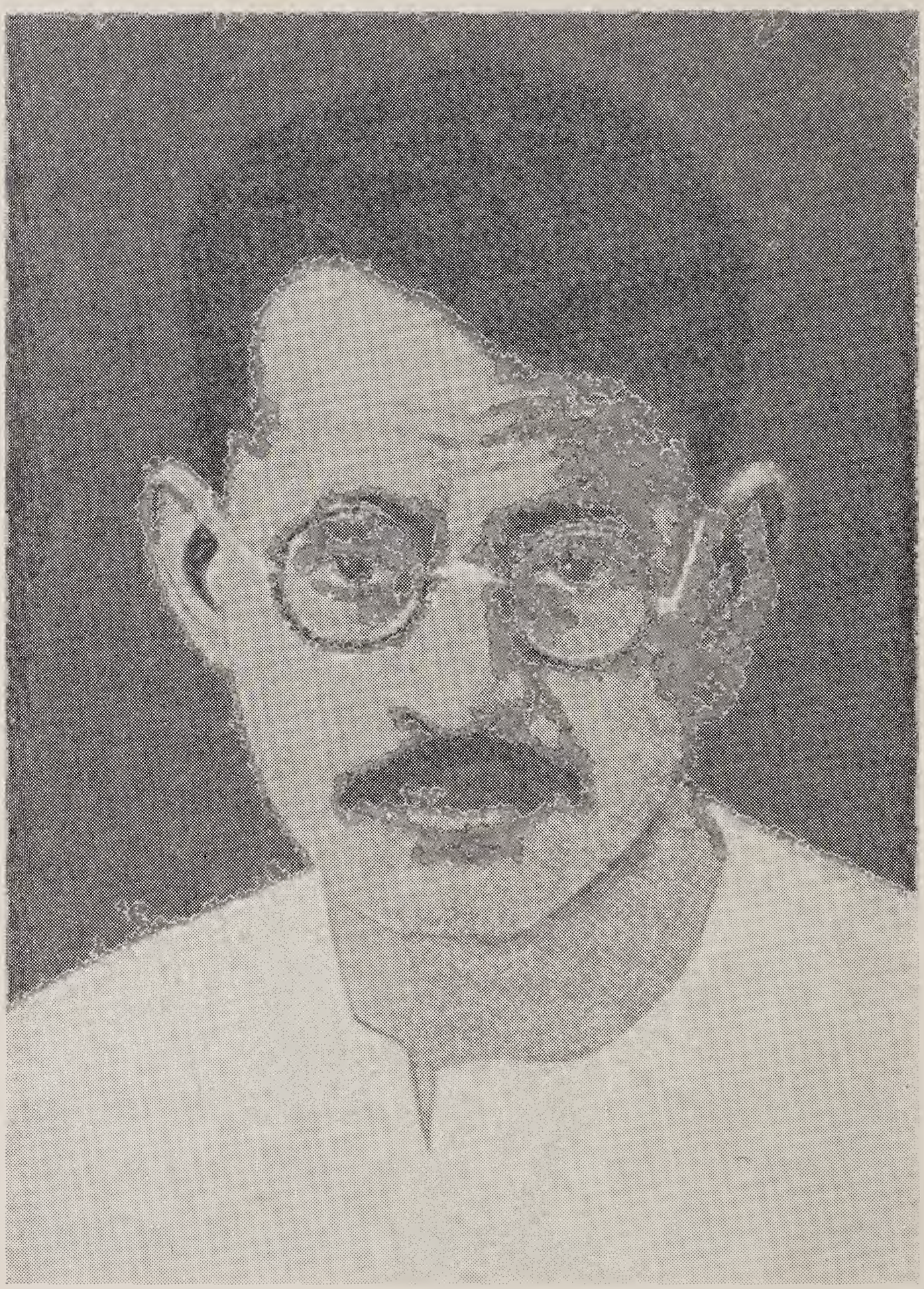

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DR. M.L. BHARGAVA

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About the Series

The object of this series is to record, for the present and future generations, the story of the struggles and achievements of the eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the attainment of independence. Except in a few cases, such authoritative biographies have not been available.

The biographies are planned as handy volumes written by knowledgeable people and giving a brief account, in simple words, of the life and activities of the eminent leaders and of their times. They are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace the more elaborate biographies.

The work of writing these lives has been entrusted to different people. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. It is hoped, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this series.

Shri R.R. Diwakar is the General Editor of the series.

Preface

During our struggle for Independence, Mahatma Gandhi used to say: "I can keep India intact and its freedom intact only if I have goodwill towards the whole of the human family, and not merely for the human family which inhabits this little spot of earth called India." The oneness of India was emphasised by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the *Unity of India,* and most of his other works. And as a true follower of Gandhi and Nehru, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi through his writings laid the greatest emphasis on the oneness of humanity and he even saw God in the midst of the teeming millions, the poor and downtrodden.

The national integration and communal harmony was vital to the existence of our nation and the same could only be accomplished through contributions of individuals, groups and institutions, was emphasised by Sri Vidyarthi throughout his life. As an individual, he became the very embodiment of national unity, national integration and communal amity; and staked his very life for that. In order to ingratiate himself in a group of selfless volunteers, he formed the Sewa Dal and founded the Sewa Ashram at Narwal (Kanpur). To further universal brotherhood he got established the *Hindustani Biradari,* which exists even today under the stewardship of Sri Paripurnanand of Kanpur.

As for institutional contribution, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi began as a Home Rule Leaguer, and outshone other contemporary leaders as a Swarajist and Congressman. He made his name as a *satyagrahi* and followed dictates of Mahatma Gandhi to the letter. The success of the Kanpur Session of the Indian National Congress projected him as a national leader. Even as a Congressite he continued his contribution to the Indian Trade Union movement and his championship of the kisans in Rae Bareli and Champaran. Through the columns of the *Pratap* he exposed the miserable plight of not only the kisans in India, but also of the

coolies under the Indentured Labour system, which had made them the helots of the British Empire.

During 1926-29 Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi made his mark as a Legislator in the U.P. Council. Although he was basically opposed to Council Entry programme of the Swarajists, but once chosen to stand as a candidate, he showed that he enjoyed the confidence of the masses in Kanpur. His speeches in the Council, all in Hindi, hitherto unpublished, show his remarkable grasp of the problems facing the province.

However, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had proclaimed the ideal of *purna swarajya* at the Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress in December 1929, and thereafter launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarathi plunged headlong into that. As Pandit Nehru had become President of the All India Congress, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was selected to succeed Panditji as President of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee. And during his presidentship followed the great Civil Resistance campaign in the most disciplined manner. How meticulously that was planned is evident from the original minutes of the U.P.C.C. over which he presided. Being at the helm he was nominated as the Director of the U.P. Satyagraha movement and was jailed. Released on 10 March 1931, he was caught in the whirlwind of communal riots at Kanpur, as a sequel to the *hartal* due to the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo and Rajguru.

It was an irony of fate that the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh was followed by that of Sri Vidyarthi. Few people knew that Bhagat Singh received his precepts from Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The contacts between the two remained till the end, when Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi visited him in Lahore jail to dissuade him from fasting unto death. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, although himself a votary of non-violence, was the preceptor, guide and philosopher for the revolutionaries. His efforts to help the accused in the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case and Kakori Case were praiseworthy.

No wonder the *Pratap* office became a rendezvous for young revolutionaries, it became a training ground not only for them but also intellectuals. A host of editors, writers and poets owed their works to the inspiration given by Sri Vidyarthi. He also became a publisher for revolutionary literature and fearlessly published their correspondence. His connections with arch revolutionary Raja Mahendra Pratap are little known. The great editor was himself a voracious reader and a writer of repute. He had a fire and zeal in him that made him one of the most popular and respected leaders of his times. Pandit Nehru at one time acclaimed him as a gem of Kanpur.

So when the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting expressed a desire to have his biography written in the Builders of Modern India series, I readily offered to do so. In the course of my writing out the present biography, I was fortunate in having secured the guidance of Sri Paripurnanand who made available to me the relevant material about the *Hindustani Biradari* when I wrote to him or met him personally. The work was facilitated by the availability of original files of the *Pratap* and the *Prabha*.

Besides the above, my meeting with Srimati Bimla Vidyarthi, daughter of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi at Kanpur, her personal reminiscences about family life, relations and the last stages of the *Pratap* were very helpful in understanding the man.

I am indebted to one and all for the help rendered and the facilities provided to me.

M.L. Bhargava

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I

Early Life

MARTYRS ARE born and not made. This was as much true of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as of others. Born in an India, ridden with poverty and degradation of foreign rule, he was determined to lead a life of sacrifice. In the words of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, India of eighteen nineties was inhabited by people who were, as the Corn Law poet had depicted:

"Landless, joyless, helpless, hopeless,
Gasping still for bread and breath,
To their graves by trouble hunted,
India's helots toil till death."

According to another writer the poor of the country could say:

"Nay, take my life and all
You take my life when you thus take the means whereby I live."

From 1872 to 1902, as many as three famines ravaged the country.

It was in such an India that, on 26 October 1890, Ganesh was born in a family living in Attarsuiya mohalla of Allahabad city. Although the family could not be called affluent, yet considering the general economic depression in the country, it had a good heritage and was reasonably well off. When Ganesh was born, his mother Gomti Devi was living with her mother.

At the time of his birth, his father Babu Jai Narain was employed as assistant teacher in Hindi in the Anglo-Vernacular School of the erstwhile Gwalior State.

Parents

Babu Jai Narain belonged to Hathgaon (Harshagaon) in the district of Fatehpur. His father Babu Bansgopal was employed in the Excise Department, and grandfather Babu Devi Prasad was a premier *rais* of his time. He had settled in Fatehpur after the 1857 War of Independence. He belonged to a prominent Kayastha family, cultured and well educated. He had one younger brother, known as Munshi Ram Narayan. He had two sons, and a daughter. The elder son came to be known as Shivavrat Narain (Shiv) and the second son was Ganesh Shankar (Ganesh). The daughter was named as Bimla Devi, subsequently married to Madan Gopal.

Babu Jai Narain had his early education in Persian. When he was only fourteen years old, his father died. So, he had to struggle hard from the very beginning. In 1883, at the age of seventeen, he passed the English Middle Examination of U.P. In 1890, he was called to Gwalior by his cousin, Babu Baij Nath. There he learnt English by his own efforts and secured a job in the Anglo-Vernacular School at Mungaoli in the then Gwalior State.

During the period of his service under the Gwalior State, Babu Jai Narain was posted at Bhilsa and Mungaoli. As his job was transferable, he normally kept his family at Allahabad and later on at Kanpur. He remained in service for about thirty years and on retirement in 1921, he came to Kanpur and stayed there till his death in 1928. During the last few years of his life, he became indifferent to everything around him. However, during this period, when he met Swami Mangalanand of Puri, he was advised to devote his time to the study of the Upanishads. This preoccupation was expected to keep him away from heart ailments. Accepting Swami's advice, Jai Narain started rendering into Hindi the ten Upanishads with the help of an Urdu translation *Alakh Prakash* written by Alakhdhari Kanaihyalal and *Vedanuvachan* by Nagina Singh. With the help of Swamiji he

completed the translation work by 1927. But after four months of its publication, he breathed his last at the age of 62.

The book entitled *Upanishad Sudha*, containing 400 pages, was published by the Pratap press on 9 December 1928. The translation had been done in simple and lucid language. In the words of Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, in this work, the author had explained the substance of *Brahmavidya*. The author was well-versed in Persian language, as well as Hindi and could also compose verses. Ganesh Shankar lost no time and saw the book in print at the earliest.

Babu Jai Narain was married to Gomti Devi, who was born in 1866. She belonged to a respectable Kayastha family of Attarsuiya, Allahabad, and was a woman of sterling character. The fearlessness inherent in Ganesh was the gift from the mother. She was religious minded and god-fearing. She was adept in cooking and household work. She soon became a fond mother; and kept the family in cheerful mood, despite adverse pecuniary circumstances. Although not educated, she was highly learned and cultured. She was very fond of relating to children stories with a moral.

She had a remarkable grit and determination, and even after martyrdom of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, she could console the mother of Hari Shankar and other children. But, according to Shivavrat Narain, on the birthday of Ganesh, subsequent to his martyrdom, she broke down and bitterly cried for four hours. All efforts to console her failed, with the result that her heart was affected adversely. After a fortnight, she departed from this world at the age of 65.

Education

Ganesh and his mother could stay at Mungaoli only for a short period. In October 1892, they went to Saharanpur, where Ganesh's grandfather, on mother's side, Suraj Prasad, was posted as assistant jailor in the District Jail. At that time, bread was

manufactured in the jail and Ganesh's grandfather gave him a bread daily, after purchasing it. The child incidentally became very fond of the jail bread, little knowing that one day, he would have to subsist on that very bread in jails.

In 1894, Ganesh rejoined his father at Mungaoli, where he was taught Urdu. In 1901, when his father was transferred to Bhilsa, he got an opportunity to study *Bangbasi* and *Bharat Mitra,* Hindi newspapers of Calcutta. By 1905, Ganesh had passed English Middle Examination with Hindi as the second language. His father sent him to Kanpur so that there he might get some job with the help of his elder brother Shivavrat Narain. But considering the learning habits of the boy, his uncle purchased for him books prescribed for the Entrance Examination of the University of Allahabad, so that he could study and appear in the examination as a private candidate. As his father had been re-transferred to Mungaoli, Ganesh again went there to continue his studies. His father arranged for his coaching in English and Mathematics and he passed the examination in 1907 in IInd Division.

After having passed the entrance examination, Ganesh Shankar was admitted to the eleventh class in the Kayastha Pathshala College, Allahabad. Having been established in 1873 by Munshi Kashiprasad Kulbhaskar for the benefit of the poor and needy Kayastha students, by 1907 it had developed into a nationalist institution.

Indoctrination at Allahabad

In 1906-7, the city of Allahabad was in ferment. Political leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Gopal Krishna Gokhale visited the place for mustering support for the nationalist party or the Indian National Congress. The year 1907 was also the fiftieth year of the 1857 War of Independence. So, the European population was in the grip of panic. Pandit Motilal Nehru was alarmed at student unrest in Allahabad and

wrote about that to his son, Jawaharla! Nehru who was studying abroad on 24 January 1907.

Allahabad in 1907 was humming with both literary and political activities. It had periodicals like *Hindi Pradeep*, *Swarajya*, *Karmayogi* and *Abhyudaya*. These were carrying articles on freedom of press, slavery, revolutionary upsurge and even cult of bomb, and the students of even Muir Central College, residing in the Hindu Boarding house assumed an attitude of open defiance to the moderate leaders of U.P. Even Sunderlal and M.M. Malaviya were openly abused.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as a student became more attracted towards political journalism and started working in the *Swarajya* office. But the Urdu weekly was warned in 1908; its editor Shanti Narain Bhatnagar was convicted in July and sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment. Although four editors, Hotilal Verma, Ram Hari, Nand Gopal and Laddh Ram were sentenced each to 10 years transportation for preaching sedition and were packed off to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, yet Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi escaped their fate due to ill-health and returned to Kanpur in February 1908. Excessive reading and writing affected his eyes adversely and he was advised to discontinue his studies only after eight months or so. During his stay at Allahabad, he could not complete his education, but became fully indoctrinated with political idealism.

Contacts with Sunderlal

Ganesh Shankar's indoctrination at Allahabad enabled him to come into contact with leading literary figures of his time. At Kanpur, according to Laxmidhar Bajpai, in 1909 he attracted attention at the Patkapur public meeting. At that time, his face was beaming with a new ray of hope and he was full of enthusiasm. Recalling his first meeting with Ganesh Shankar at Allahabad, Sunderlal recorded that it was in 1909 that he came into contact with him. The former looked simple and unconten-

tious, but full of vigour and enthusiasm. He appeared to him to be sincere and a young man of determination.

After their first meeting, Ganesh Shankar started writing for the *Karmayogi* a fortnightly review in Hindi, edited by Sunderlal. It reproduced translations of important extracts from Aurobindo Ghose's *Karamyogni* and Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Kesari*. It published independent articles on principles of nationalism, swadeshi and boycott movements, national education and Swaraj. At Allahabad, Ganesh Shankar had to live with some of his relatives. When he went to Kanpur, he stayed with his elder brother. At Kanpur, Sunderlal met him at Kashinath's residence; which was shared by his elder brother, Devi Prasad Khatri. His was the place which in those days was frequented by revolutionaries. Ganesh Shankar became quite intimate with them.

However, at Allahabad, the *Karmayogi* invited the wrath of the local authorities under the Press Acts. As Sunderlal expressed his inability to deposit a security of Rs. 9,000/-, both his papers, *Hindi Pradeep* and *Karmayogi* ceased publication by 1910. The *Swarajya* too, due to incessant prosecution of its eight editors, stopped its publication by that date. So Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's early places of apprenticeship in journalism and earning petty sums disappeared sooner than expected.

Interlude of Service

On return from Allahabad, Ganesh Shankar joined the local Currency Office, Kanpur on a paltry sum of rupees thirty per month with effect from 6 February 1908. He was no doubt sincere and efficient in work, but was given to incessant reading. One day, while he was supervising the burning of the wornout notes, he started reading a book. At that time, his officer, an Englishman and Superintendent of the Currency Office, Kanpur, came on the spot and objected to his reading the book. Arguments ensued, and due to the officer's remarks, Ganesh Shankar

decided to resign his post with effect from 26 November 1908, i.e., after only 10 months and 20 days service.

From 1 December 1909, Ganesh Shankar accepted the job of a teacher in Pandit Prithvinath High School, Kanpur, on a salary of rupees twenty per month only. He worked in the school till 5 December 1910 and was forced to resign the post. The reason again was his habit of reading. This time he was reading copies of *Karmayogi* (Allahabad) which was regarded as a seditious paper, and the headmaster Sajivan Lal objected to it. According to Narain Prasad Arora, who was also his colleague, Sajivan Lal had become annoyed at their propagation of the paper of Aurobindo Ghose and so he got rid of both.

During his stay at Kanpur, in 1909 and 1910, he had become member of the 'Hindu Friends Association' and had come into contact with the elite of the town. Kashinath introduced him to Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi who soon took fancy to him and became his *Guru* in journalism.

When employed as teacher in P.P.N. School, Kanpur, Ganesh Shankar used to coach the son of a sub-inspector of police. The boy was never attentive. Ganesh Shankar told his father that there was no use taking money from him as the boy could not benefit from his tuition. The sub-inspector was very much impressed by his high ideals and wanted that his son should sit at the feet of such a teacher. But Ganesh Shankar refused to oblige him and thus lost the means of livelihood also. According to Narain Prasad Arora, Ganesh Shankar also served as private secretary to Seth Ram Gopal for some time.

Subsequently Ganesh Shankar was reported to have worked with Hindustan Insurance Company also at Kanpur. But whatever money he received, he spent on the purchase of books on Homoeopathy and Electro-therapy, and boxes of medicine. He began distributing medicines to members of his family and also to his neighbours. He experimented that smaller doses of lower potency were much more useful.

Marriage

Although Ganesh Shankar was struggling for settled career and was without adequate means of livelihood, his marriage was fixed with Prakash Devi, the grand-daughter of Munshi Visheveshwar Dayal of Harvanshpur, Tehsil Soraon, Allahabad. She was at that time only 16 years of age and Ganesh Shankar was 19 years old. As the father-in-law was of traditional views, so he wanted music and dance parties to accompany the marriage party. Ganesh Shankar vehemently protested against such things but despite his protests arrangements were made for music and dance at the bride's place. But as luck would have it, it rained so heavily on the day that by the time the marriage party reached the bride's place, the time for music and dance was over. So the opportunity of any irritant to the bridegroom did not arise, and an embarrassing situation was thus averted.

This matrimonial alliance between the two was cordial and happy. But the nature of the newly wed was poles apart. Ganesh Shankar was firm and resolute in his resolve come what may, but Prakash Devi was polite and gentle to the extreme. However, both were one in facing the ups and downs of life and remained undaunted in spite of sacrifices. While Ganesh Shankar remained engrossed in the editorial and press work, she managed the household and looked after the family. Even when Ganesh Shankar entered politics and courted arrest , she rose to the occasion and became a tower of strength to him.

In 1922, when he was pestered with requests to agree to apologise and express regrets by not jumping over security deposit, he decided to surrender and court imprisonment. He frankly expressed his sentiments to his wife who elegantly replied: "I congratulate you on your decision, while performing your duty, even if you die, I shall prefer that." According to Devvrat Shastri, he in a letter, commended her spirit. She was right in what she had written. Death was preferable to both, in preference to an apology or surrender. He assured her in that letter that he won't

do anything, which might lower their prestige. The courage, that she had shown, gave him strength to fulfil his duty. He was happy to undergo imprisonment and steer clear through the accompanying ordeals. The sentiments expressed in his letter of 1922 were amply proved by the entries in his jail diary from 31 January 1922 to 17 May 1922, now published. Equally remarkable are his articles entitled *Jail Jiwan Ki Jhalak* in twelve serials, published in the *Pratap*. They speak of the sterling character of both.

Lure of Journalism

Contact with Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, editor of the monthly magazine *Saraswati*, yielded quick dividends for Ganesh Shankar. He was in need of an assistant, so he agreed to employ Ganesh Shankar as assistant editor on rupees twenty-five per mensem, with effect from 2 November 1911. He soon became enamoured of his young and enthusiastic editor. Subsequently Dwivedi himself paid the following tribute to his early apprenticeship in these words, "So long as Ganesh remained with me, he did his job with determination and hard labour. Daily he used to come to Juhi on foot and return. His politeness, gentlemanliness, habit to work hard and craze for acquisition of knowledge endeared him to me. He used to respect me as his *Guru*, on the other hand I regarded him as my teacher in many respects. Slowly he became a member of my family and there was hardly any occasion to differ and quarrel on any topic. Ganesh used to help me also in personal domestic matters. He picked up writing habit in Hindi. I wanted him to learn Sanskrit also, but he was inclined towards politics more than literary pursuits. Therefore, I did not pressurize him. He was a voracious reader. Even while walking towards Juhi, he used to scan the newspaper or some book.

"When through *Saraswati* Ganesh had become well known, the *Abhyudaya* authorities dragged him for their paper. After having finalised the deal Ganesh informed me. I was bound to

allow him, so I allowed him to go. But I also administered a mild rebuke to him. How is it that you have struck the deal without consulting me? If you had told me all things, I would not have checked you from going. What right had I to stop you ? I was your well-wisher. Ganesh was very much influenced by my rebuke and was repentant for his mistake."

In spite of having parted like that, Dwivedi and Ganesh Shankar remained very close to each other. As *Saraswati* magazine was a literary one and Ganesh Shankar was inclined towards political journals, he joined *Abhyudaya* at Allahabad on 29 December 1912. He continued there till 23 September 1913. He got a stipend of rupees forty per mensem only. The *Abhyudaya* was running at a loss and with the joining of Ganesh Shankar, number of its subscribers increased considerably and its income also went up. He used to write articles and even editorials for the paper. The attitude of the paper had consistently been "one of carping criticism of Government measures and the British generally". The paper was edited by Krishna Kant Malaviya, nephew of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The publisher and printer was Badri Prashad Pande. Ever since 1907 when it was started, it had shown itself as a keen critic of the British Government's measures. Between 1907 and 1915, the Abhyudaya Press had been printing three newspapers and magazines, the *Abhyudaya,* the *Maryada* in Hindi and the *Crucible* in English.

Although Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi got a paltry remuneration of rupees forty per month only in the *Abhyudaya,* yet his stay at Allahabad enabled him to come into contact with the elite of the town. He also satisfied the urge for advanced studies. He scanned the works of George Bernard Shaw, Upton Sinclair, Shelley, Stuart Mill, Tolstoy, Spencer, Rousseau, Mopassaun, Ruskin, Carlyle, Thoreo, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Browning, Anatole France, H.G. Wells, etc. He took fascination to Victor Hugo and later on translated his masterpiece *Les Miserables*, under the title *Ahuti.* In 1921, he also translated his work entitled *Ninetythree* and an article entitled *Glimpses of Political*

Revolution. He had also written on Joan of Arc, Maxim Gorky and Peter Kropotkin the great Anarchist.

Besides reading the literary works of the world's men of letters, he also read the political writings of the great political leaders of India, e.g. Dada Bhai Naoroji, Ferozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindra Nath Tagore. By this time, he had not only become a Hindi writer of repute, but also had delved into the works of Surdas, Tulsidas, Kabirdas, Bhartendu Babu Harishchandra and Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. The great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, fascinated him. He thus became an ardent student and earned the appellation of 'VIDYARTHI'. Thereafter he always wrote his name as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, a life-long student. According to him every man in his life is just a 'Vidyarthi'—an accomplisher.

While working with the *Abhyudaya*, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was worried about its bad finances. At one time he became anxious even to purchase and own it. He requested Shiv Narain Misra to arrange for the finances. But somehow, the idea to own a paper at Allahabad was given up. Although the deal could not be struck and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was compelled by his illness to leave Allahabad and return to Kanpur, yet it showed which way the wind was blowing. The idea of running and owning a paper by himself had germinated in Ganesh Shankar Vidhyarthi at Allahabad. It was to see its fruition at Kanpur.

Earlier Writings

The *Saraswati*, edited by Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi was of multifarious interests and was widely read as a literary magazine. Being impressed with the disaster of the sinking of the *Titanic*, luxury ship in 1912, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi wrote his very first article. It was liked by Dwivedi and published in the *Saraswati*. Besides this on the occasion of the Delhi Durbar, the

style of salutation by the Indian princes was a subject of comment in the Indian newspapers. And when Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaikwad of Baroda declined to salute in that manner and retired to his seat, the Anglo-Indian papers commented adversely on the episode. But young Ganesh Shankar wrote an article in defence of Baroda prince and sent it to *Hitvarta* which was edited by Baburao Vishnu Paradkar. After making some changes, he published the article in *Hitvarta* and the same was read with interest. Its publication gave encouragement to the promising writer.

While working as assistant editor with the *Saraswati*, Ganesh Shankar translated a good many English stories into Hindi, entitled *Shekhchilli Ki Kahaniyan*. It was his first book in Hindi.

Thus working under the able guidance of Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Ganesh Shankar developed his creative faculty of writing in Hindi. He developed his own literary style also. Appreciation was quick to come and his writings in the *Abhyudaya* attracted attention and also boosted the sales of the paper. This was no small achievement in those times of Hindi journalism. In all probability it was this initial success that emboldened Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to start a paper of his own in 1913 at Kanpur.

Years of Distress

From 1907 to 1913, Ganesh Shankar's life was uncertain, full of pecuniary difficulties and physical ailments. His studies abruptly ended, never to be resumed. Unemployment stared at him at every step. But he was not scared. He remained undaunted. He was fired with the ardent desire to do something for the country, the poor and the downtrodden. His ardent patriotism and contacts with men like Shanti Narain Bhatnagar of the *Swarajya* and Sunderlal of the *Karmayogi* landed him into the vortex of revolutionaries. He was heedless about emoluments.

Although he was married, he was unruffled by family responsibilities. For him service to the nation and country was uppermost.

As Ganesh Shankar was devoted to voracious reading, he imbibed the cultural and political atmosphere of the times. He became fond of history. While studying for matriculation, the text-book—*Book of Golden Deeds*—written by Miss Charlotte M. Young, impressed him so much that he started writing a book entitled, *Our Renunciation for the Benefit of Others*. In this he completed stories of Indian heroes who had made sacrifices for others and become great.

Soaring Idealism

The preface written to the above-mentioned book, unpublished, throws floodlight on the soaring idealism of young Ganesh Shankar. Although he was only nineteen years of age in 1909, he wrote:

"Service of the motherland is the prime duty of every man. Propagation of history is the greatest weapon for uplift of the country. It is my fervent duty that I must dedicate my life to the service of the motherland according to my faith and belief."

In the text of the book, he has written, "It was only after listening to the old fables of the great Hindu chieftains that Maharana Pratap (of Udaipur) became the worshipper of the goddess of Liberty. The stories of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* transformed the dependent son of a dependent father into Chattrapati of Maharashtra. Why go far? In our country, more particularly in the rainy season, the village folk recite Alha, and it is a sight to see their enthusiasm at the time of recital, the mode of their delivery, the exuberance of bravery from the movements of their limbs, etc. In short, history has the strength to awaken the slumbering, make them wide awake to stand up on their own legs and make blood run into the veins of the persons standing. To put life into the dead and to make the dry

blossom forth into lush green, can only be achieved either by nectar (if there is anything like nectar) or by history. Refusal to accept the bliss of history is sheer obstinacy."

Such were the sentiments of the young writer. No wonder, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi became so enamoured of the high ideal of Maharana Pratap that he was determined to start the paper after his name i.e. PRATAP. The years of endeavour, distress and pecuniary difficulties ultimately ushered him into a life of sacrifice and dedicated service.

II

Editor

DESPITE PECUNIARY difficulties and uncertainties of Hindi journalism, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi went ahead to found a weekly at Kanpur on 9 November 1913. He was encouraged in this venture by Shiv Narain Misra, Narain Prasad Arora, Kashinath and others. At that time he had neither the nesessary finances nor was the political atmosphere conducive to such an enterprise. But Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, with his high sense of idealism, dedication and spirit of sacrifice, started the *Pratap* in 1913 in Philkhana, Kanpur.

In the beginning, the *Pratap* had no press of its own and its first sixteen issues were printed at the Coronation Press, Kanpur. Seth Kamlapati Singhania and Seth Ram Gopal helped the paper with finances. A dilapidated house on a monthly rent of rupees four only was available for it to start with.

Inaugural Issue

The Hindi weekly that made its appearance on 9 November, showed the high ideals with which it was lanuched. The inaugural issue carried an article entitled *Karmaveer Maharana Pratap*, which was written by an Indian youth who was none else than the young editor himself. At the age of only twenty-two, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi wrote: "Sacrifice—only sacrifice—that was what the freedom of Chittor wanted." There was thunder, lightning, clouds and darkness all around, and in order to safeguard the honour of Queen Padmini and the pride of Chittor bloodshed ensued. When the earth was satiated with the blood of heroes, the goddess of liberty of Chittor felt satisfied. The literary

fervour, with which he wrote the article, was bound to inspire any of the readers and no doubt the issue can be read again and again even today.

After recounting the past glory of Chittor, the writer eulogised the greatness of Maharana Pratap, and acclaimed that the very name was the Glory of India, the pride of the nation; symbol of firmness and politeness; its fame and historical role. He vouchsafed that, so long this ideal was kept in view, his name would be remembered.

Before launching the venture, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi sought the blessings of Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, who gave him the motto for his weekly. The couplet read:

"Whosoever is not proud of his own self-respect or that of his motherland—

Is not a Man, rather is worse than an animal
and is no more than a dead mass."

The very first numbers of the *Pratap* earned praise from daily *Bharat Mitra* and *Kanpur Gazette*. The latter applauded the high ideals of the *Pratap* and its laudable ambition to perpetuate the glory of its namesake, Maharana Pratap.

First Tirade

The plight of the Indentured Labour—the coolie emigrants—was the burning question of the day. The *Pratap* took up cudgels on their behalf. The young editor took a fancy to Gopal Krishna Gokhale's advocacy of the rights of Indians in South Africa. It also wrote an article on *Karmveer* Gandhi in the very second issue. It appealed to the kind-hearted Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, to take up the cause of Indian emigrants and not to show any weakness. In order to further boost the cause of the Indian emigrants, the *Pratap* started collecting funds for their amelioration. The citizens of Kanpur were admonished for not liberally donating to *Pratap Karam Veer Fund* meant for the

Indians overseas. The editor in two of his forceful editorials in November 1913 highlighted the plight of the oppressed Indians in South Africa.

The labourers' strike and their hardships also attracted the attention of the young and enthusiastic editor; determined to be fearless and outspoken. The living conditions of the mill-workers in the fast developing industrial town of Kanpur could not escape his attention. With the advocacy of the cause of the poor and the exploited, the newly established Hindi weekly became extremely popular.

Special Number

Within a year of its emergence, the *Pratap* brought out its special number in September 1914. It was entitled *Rashtriya Ank* with *Bharatmata* in the garb of *Chandi*, flanked by two lions as its special feature and photograph of Mahatma Gandhi as a *satyagrahi* on it. It was priced at four annas and had 60 pages. Amongst its contributors were Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Maithili Saran Gupta, Munshi Prem Chand, Vidyavati Seth B.A., Syed Haider Hussain, Badrinath Bhatt B.A., Srimati Balaji, Satyanarayana Kaviratna and Janardhan Bhatt B.A. Naturally such a number enabled the *Pratap* to establish its reputation in Hindi journalism. By November 1914, the editor had made his debut as self-appointed champion of the mill-workers, the coolie-emigrants and the exploited kisans of Champaran.

The *Pratap*, dated 22 November 1914, published a letter regarding "Champaran Men Andher". It condemned outright, the practice of *Teen Kathia* in indigo plantation farms, called upon the people to oppose such a tyranny and bemoaned the inactivity and imbecility of the Government of Bihar. It openly exhorted individuals and institutions to oppose the repression of workers in indigo plantations by Europeans. It opposed the unwarraned demand of *Salami*, at the rate of Rs. 18/- per *bigha*. It also published an article condemning the *begar*. It carried an

appeal by a sufferer, announcing that the author was about to write a book on the atrocities of the indigo planters of Champaran. This was too much for the then government. The Government by a notification declared it as forfeited. Undaunted, the *Pratap* continued its tirade against the indigo planters.

Defiance of Press Laws

The year 1913, when the *Pratap* was founded at Kanpur in November, was the worst in the history of the Press in U.P. Due to the publication of the sensational and inflammatory pamphlet entitled "Cawnpur Ki Khuni Dastan" by *Tauhid* Press, Meerut, the Government took action against it and the *Comrade*. After the outbreak of the World War I, the Defence of India Act was passed on 18 March 1915 and the Government found it convenient to restrain freedom of the Press. Military Censorship was also imposed. Consequently in U.P. from 1914 to 1918, the newspapers came under active surveillance. The Press Act of 1910 was already in force. The authorities demanded security from a number of presses and forfeited securities of a large number of newspapers on one pretext or the other. The *Independent* (Allahabad), dated 5 April 1919, published a list of such presses which showed the actual working of the Press Act of 1910 , as per reply given by U.P. Government to a question put by C.Y. Chintamani, the renowned editor of the *Leader* (Allahabad).

Having worked with the *Swarajya,* the *Karmayogi* and the *Abhyudaya* (Allahabad), Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was well aware of the tentacles of the Press Act. But his debut as a youthful and dynamic editor between 1913 and 1914 showed that he was heedless of the consequences of the action which could be taken against the *Pratap* by the authorities. So he fearlessly continued his advocacy of the peasants working in Champaran indigo plantations, the coolie emigrants in over-seas colonies and the mill-workers at Kanpur. He knew that the Sword of Damocles hung over his head.

On 24 April at 2.00 a.m. the Deputy Inspector-General of Police raided the houses of the editor, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, and the keeper of the *Pratap* press, Shiv Narain Misra. After searching questions, their articles and papers were ransacked. Nothing incriminating was found although the police examined the letters, accounts and even the lists of subscribers.

According to an eye-witness account of the incident, there were at that time only two chairs in the press office; one was occupied by the D.I.G. and the other by the City Kotwal. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi took exception to it and asked the Kotwal, Baqar Ali, to vacate the chair, as he was on duty. As soon as the chair was vacant, he occupied it and thereafter protested to the D.I.G. against his breaking open the almirahs. The D.I.G. Police retorted that the editor might send the bills for payment. Although the young editor showed unusual bravery and defiance, yet in those days of autocratic foreign rule such a raid was bound to have devastating effect on the meagre finances of the paper. But Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi forged ahead and continued his tirade against the Press Laws.

According to a report published in *Pratap*, dated 26 April, the raid on the house of Shiv Narain Misra was comparable to a dacoity by the police. The behaviour of the police was condemned by readers in their letters to the editor. Even some of the contemporary newspapers like the *Abhyudaya* (Allahabad) and the *Patliputra* (Patna) created doubts in the minds of the subscribers of the *Pratap*. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, alarmed by the adverse effects, published a signed note in the issue of 5 July to dispel such doubts. However, even in the second year, the *Pratap* was running at a loss. It was compelled to issue an appeal to the subscribers to enrol at least five more subscribers so that the paper could tide over the financial crisis.

Another Special Number

Undaunted by pecuniary difficulties the editor published a

Rashtriya Ank on the third anniversary of the establishment of the *Pratap*. It contained 70 pages and was priced only six annas. The special number enabled the *Pratap* to regain its popularity. It again started its tirade against the exploitation of the Indians overseas and demanded redress to their grievances. It also published a pamphlet entitled "Coolie Pratha" and created a flutter in official circles.

In October 1916, under the Press Act of 1910, the U.P. Government demanded a security of rupees one thousand from the *Pratap* press. Failure to deposit it would have led to the closure of the press as well as the paper. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi pleaded with the authorities that, in case of *New India* published and edited by Mrs. Annie Besant, it was held that security could not be demanded if that was not taken at the very start of that. Mohamed Ali also put forth the same plea when the security was demanded from the *Comrade* on its publication from Delhi. But the Government turned down the requests. So Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi decided to deposit the security under protest and then appealed against it. The District Magistrate cancelled his original order dispensing with security and accepted the security on 2 November 1916.

At the Indian National Congress, Lucknow session in 1916 delegates pleaded with Mahatma Gandhi to visit Champaran and take up their cause. Mahatma Gandhi at first declined, as in the words of D.G. Tendulkar, he "had not heard of the place and he did not know its geographical position". However, due to the mandate of the Congress at Lucknow, he visited Kanpur, and stayed at the *Pratap* office on 1 January 1917. It was here that he assured the Bihar delegates that he would visit Bihar in March-April 1917.

In April 1917, when Mahatma Gandhi reached Motihari and Betia, the *Pratap* highlighted the importance of his mission. Its special correspondent reported day to day activities and also the panic created among the indigo planters due to Mahatma's visit.

On 9 August 1917, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was summoned to the court by the magistrate and told that the Government had taken exception to the articles published in the issues of the *Pratap*, dated 4, 11 and 18 June, regarding tyranny in Champaran. He was *warned* for spreading hatred against the European subjects of His Majesty. He was also informed that he had previously been warned *twice*, and thereafter would be proceeded against under the Press Act. According to the editor, this statement of the magistrate was wrong, as he had been warned only *once*, for his article on Irish revolt in July 1916, and not twice. [Editorial dated 13 August 1917].

Seditious Poems

As the leading Hindi weekly, the *Pratap*, had been publishing patriotic poems, the authorities objected to them also. The poem published in the issue of 19 June 1916 was strongly objected to. It read as follows:

"Oh slavery, why art thou relentlessly pursuing us?
Have some pity at least now, why art thou pecking at the heart?
Thou hast taken away wealth and glory
and hast derived us of freedom.
What has been left with us now that thou
accused one, art casting greedy looks?
We are well covered with the robe of poverty.
O tyrant! why are thou slaughtering us,
starved though we are?
Leaving the whole creation thou hast settled here,
O! accursed one, why dost thou intend to suck our blood?"

This poem was taken as a pretext for demand of security. But even after that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi continued to publish patriotic and inspiring poems. In the issue of 13 August 1917, he published a poem by Trishool entitled "Sri Krishna

Vinay" (Prayer to Lord Krishna), seeking his help to protect the oppressed. This was followed by the publication of yet another poem "Ma" (mother) by Jagganath Joshi in the issue of 24 September, exhorting Indians to engage themselves fearlessly and firmly in constitutional agitation for the attainment of self-government. On Vijai Dashmi in 1917, he brought a special number entitled "Rashtriya Ank" (National Number) despite warnings and governmental actions. Poems and articles published in the *Pratap* continued to be examined by local officials.

Forfeiture of Security

In the issue of the *Pratap* dated 22 April 1918, a poem entitled 'Soudai Vatan' by Nanak Singh Hamdam was published, the same was declared as seditious. The security of rupees one thousand deposited by the *Pratap* in 1916 was declared forfeited and a fresh one was demanded by the Government. This action was taken under Sec. 4(1) of the Press Act. The forfeiture of the security was a severe blow to the *Pratap* but it burst into poetry, bemoaning the lot. It wrote:

"It has been wounded, and the pain is incessantly severe;

Now it is upto you to either put ointment on that or pour salt on that."

The *Pratap* ceased publication for some time. But the public sympathy was so great that the money required for deposit of security was soon collected and deposited on 8 July 1918. The paper resumed publication. The total subscription received in the Pratap Aid Fund reached an unexpected figure of rupees eight thousand and the editor thanked the public, donors and well-wishers wholeheartedly. It was apprehended that the local authorities in order to see the paper stop publication might demand the maximum security of rupees ten thousand, but it had to deposit only rupees one thousand. So when substantial balance was left in the press account, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Shiv Narain Misra decided to give the *Pratap* more stability.

Creation of a Trust

Having built up the *Pratap* press and the paper by sheer personal valour and labour, sacrifice and exemplary courage, it was a proud day for Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to declare it public property. So a Trust was created and registered as such on 13 March 1919. The following became its trustees: (i) Maithili Saran Gupta, Chirgaon; (ii) Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohatgi, Kanpur, (iii) Phoolchand, Kanpur, (iv) Shiv Narain Misra, Vaidya, Kanpur, (v) Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Kanpur.

Consequent to the creation of the Trust, the District Magistrate, Kanpur, Stiffe passed an amazing order on 24 April 1919. The order read, "I see no reason to exempt this paper from security. The new printer (Mr. Shiv Narain Misra) has long been connected with the paper which is notorious. It had been warned twice and had its security (of Rs. 1,000) forfeited once in 20 months I have been here. The late printer (Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi) who has joined the (Trust) Committee has been prominent in the recent hartals, and in times of disturbances like the present it is obviously necessary to keep a firm hand on the press. I therefore, fix the security to be filed at Rs. 2,000/- and have warned the printer that he is not at liberty to publish the paper until the security has been filed in my court."

The *Pratap* bore the brunt and deposited the security as demanded; and resumed publication after a gap of two or three days only. Only the next number of the paper was delayed. But its enthusiasm was not damped. On Deepawali day in November 1918, it brought out a special number entitled *Swarajya* (Independence) with all its fanfare and celebrated its fifth birth anniversary.

Gandhian Era

In the words of M. Chalapathi Rau, "Gandhi was probably the greatest journalist of all times and the weeklies he ran and

edited were probably the greatest weeklies the world has known." It was he who evolved the technique of the press acting as a weapon of *Satyagraha*. And the publication of the *Satyagrahi* on 7 April 1919, opened a new vista in the role of Press in the freedom struggle. Gandhi issued detailed instructions as to how civil disobedience was to be offered by selling proscribed books and publishing unregistered newspaper. When Mahatmaji translated that into action, its example was followed by Press in U.P. and other provinces.

The *Independent* (Allahabad) in its very first issue proclaimed its ideal of acting as an organ of democracy. Its emergence on 5 February 1919 was acclaimed as "a sign of national awakening in U.P". Its subsequent issues highlighted the cases of other presses in the country and demand of security from the *Pratap* was commented upon. Action was also taken against the *Independent* (Allahabad).

Worst Crisis for Pratap

The leading Hindi weekly of Kanpur continued to champion the cause of the kisans and workers. In 1921, it highlighted the agrarian disturbances in the districts of Rae Bareli and Sultanpur. The newspaper carried varied account with big headlines and terrific posters of agrarian riots in U.P. It was transmitted to London that the police authorities were unable to control the mobs and Bolshevik influence might penetrate India. The Secretary of State for India was unduly alarmed and telegraphically asked for a report from the then Viceroy on 12 January 1921. In reply it was clarified by the U.P. Government that the problem in fact was social and economic rather than political. There was no information to show that the movement had been directly inspired or controlled by Mahatma Gandhi.

The *Pratap* like other newspapers published the reports of the riots in its issues of 13 and 17 January 1921, and compared repression to Dyer's massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.

Having supported the cause of the tenantry the paper attained unprecedented popularity all over U.P. and the then Governor Harcourt Butler felt unnerved. The Government initiated action against the Editor, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and the Printer, Shiv Narain Misra of the *Pratap* (Kanpur) under Sec. 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code and demanded securities.

The District Magistrate of Kanpur served a notice on the Editor and Printer of the *Pratap* on 27 April 1921 under Sec. 108, for having been guilty of spreading sedition and bringing His Majesty the King into disrepute. The articles objected to were dated 12 January on Rae Bareli massacre; 10 February, entitled the same and 11 February, article on Fyzabad disturbances and the official version. They were asked to show cause why they be not asked to deposit personal bonds of rupees five thousand each and securities of the like amount. The Printer, Shiv Narain Misra filed a declaration in the court of the District Magistrate that he was no more the keeper and printer of the *Pratap Weekly* as well as the daily. The same was accepted. Krishna Dutt Paliwal filed a fresh declaration of being the new keeper and printer. The *Pratap* re-appeared thereafter with reduced number of pages. The new keeper and printer was asked to file fresh declaration and deposit a security of rupees two thousand. However, on the request of the former printer and keeper, the security deposited in the name of Shiv Narain Misra was allowed to be transferred in the name of Krishna Dutt Paliwal.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi on receipt of fresh summons from the Magistrate called a meeting of the Pratap Trustees and submitted his resignation so that its assets worth rupees fifteen thousand might not be jeopardised. In this way both Shiv Narain Misra and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi separated themselves so that even if they executed bonds under Sec. 108, the assets of the *Pratap* would remain intact.

At Rae Bareli when Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was jailed for the first time, for having written seditious and incriminating

articles, he was got released only after an hour. His friends and well-wishers had deposited his security. But when charged under Sec. 108, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, on arrival at Kanpur from Rae Bareli was in a defiant mood. He wrote to the Magistrate that on 23 May 1921, when his security was deposited, he was not a free agent. Therefore, he requested the District Magistrate to cancel the security deposited and expressed willingness to go to jail. Despite persuasion of the well-wishers, he surrendered to the local authorities on 16 October 1921, and thus obliged the then foreign government to see him behind the bars.

A study of the then confidential files reveals that the U.P. Government had been castigated by the then Secretary of State, Edwin Samuel Montagu for not telegraphing to London first hand reports of Rae Bareli riots *at once*, and having including them only in the weekly telegram. From his correspondence with the Viceroy, it is evident that the whole of the London Press was clamorous about the riots in Rae Bareli as they scented spread of Bolshevism in India. So, in order to cover up their lapse, the U.P. Government and local authorities of Kanpur seized the opportunity to send Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to Central Jail, Lucknow on 25 October 1921. As he had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment in Rae Bareli case, his appeal in the Chief Court, Lucknow, remained pending till 1 February 1922 when he learnt in jail that the same had been rejected. After completing his term of imprisonment, he was released from Lucknow District Jail on 22 May 1922.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had recorded his reminiscences of jail life in a diary and subsequently wrote, "Glimpses of Jail Life" in twelve serials, published in the *Pratap*. In the issue of 31 May 1921, he also clarified why he had refused to file his statement in the court. He was emotional and he refused to disown his responsibility although he had ceased to be the editor of the *Pratap*. The charges levelled against him were such, as could never have been regarded as appropriate for his prosecution under Section 108. He did his duty in exposing 'the uncalled-

for' firing on the kisans in Munshiganj and Fursatganj of Rae Bareli district. In the prevailing atmosphere in the districts, he was not hopeful of justice, so he declined to file his written statement. He was facing a contempt case for the same reasons in Rae Bareli court, so he thought his attempt at defence would be futile.

Daily Pratap

On 22 November 1920, the *Pratap* weekly announced that the daily *Pratap* had also been published and specimen copy could be had free of charge from *Pratap* office. It was priced at one anna per copy, and the annual subscription was only rupees eighteen. In an editorial, it was explained why after seven years' existence, the *Pratap* press had ventured on such a task. It was impelled by its ardent desire to serve the country, which was passing through a critical period, more vigorously and promptly. It was really a herculean task to bring out a Hindi daily in days of non-cooperation, and in defiance of all Press Laws and Surveillance by local authorities on the press.

Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi congratulated the *Pratap* on its emergence as a daily and felt proud that it had risen to his expectations. In a short time of only seven years it had endeared itself to thousands of its subscribers and had accredited itself well. He prayed for its prosperity and popularity. He wanted the *Pratap* to attain the status of the *Times* (London) in India.

Within a few days the number of subscribers of the daily *Pratap* rose to five thousand, and so long it was published it maintained its decorum and stature. It never compromised its ideals; and due to adverse circumstances it was closed down on 6 July 1921.

Warning again

During the post-War period there were a number of Hindi

newspapers, and outstanding journalists in northern India. The *Bharat Mitra* (Calcutta), *Vijaya* (Delhi) and the *Swatantra* started in 1920 were holding their ground, despite competition and government repression. The *Aj* of Benares was also started in 1920. The *Arjun* (Delhi) started in 1923 went through many vicissitudes being prosecuted by Government from time to time. But among the most prominent Hindi newspapers the name of the *Pratap* (Kanpur) remained at the top, despite warnings and prosecution of its Editor, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

Although Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had been elected as a member of the U.P. Legislative Council, yet the local authorities left no stone unturned to harass him. When in the issue of 4 December 1927 he wrote his famous editorial entitled "Birds of the same feather"—referring to a debate in the British Parliament on the proposed appointment of Administrative Reforms Enquiry Commission, the local authorities treated that as seditious. In the House of Lords, Lord Birkenhead, Lord Oliver, Lord Reading and Lord Chelmsford spoke and in the House of Commons, leaders of the various political parties expressed their views. According to the learned and outspoken editor, the members of the British Labour Party as well as those of the Liberal Party, were all unanimous in maintaining the stranglehold of slavery on Indians. So naturally all Indians agreed in raising their common voice to boycott the Reforms Commission, having no Indian on that. After exposing the real intents of the British leaders of all parties, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi alleged that Indians were being enslaved more and more in all matters. There was no end to their exploitation. He also cited the case of the alarming import of vegetable oil in the country during the preceding two or three years. The then District Magistrate of Kanpur, Munro, summoned him and on behalf of the U.P. Government administered a warning on 9 January 1928 for having spread disaffection against His Majesty's loyal subjects.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi remained unaffected by the aforesaid warning and continued his triade against the

Champaran atrocities. His articles and comments again attracted attention of the local authorities and one more stern warning was administered to him on 15 January 1928.

In May 1929, the Weekly *Pratap* was banned in the neighbouring country of Nepal as it had adversely commented on the administrative affairs of the country. In its issue of 5 May, the paper expressed surprise at the action of the administration as it could have sent its rejoinder or counter-statement clarifying the matter. This policy was followed by the paper in respect of Indian states as well. Affairs of Gwalior, Mewar, Jaipur, Udaipur, Indore, Tehri and other states came in for comments and exposition much to the chagrin of the ruling princes. According to Vijai Singh Pathik, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, at great personal risk, started fanning political awakening in Rajasthan states as early as 1915. He was equally inspiring to the Gwalior State, even though his father was its employee. At one time he refused to withdraw the allegations published in the *Pratap* and even dared request his father to resign and come back from Gwalior to Kanpur. On another occasion, when he was face to face with the ruler, he promised to publish a corrigendum to what the correspondent had sent if that was wrong. Besides that, when he was offered travelling expenses for going to Gwalior, he declined to accept that as he was on duty there to investigate the truth. When the ruler insisted that he should accept the travelling expenses as the state was not poor, he retorted that the *Pratap* too was not poor. A rare example of high idealism indeed.

In short the editor of the *Pratap* was doing pioneer service to the people of the then Indian states, which later on was taken up by the Praja Parishads and the Indian States People's Congress. And he did all that despite the Princes Protection Act 1922 being on the Statute Book. The then Viceroys were committed to the protection of the Indian princes against disaffection . Action was taken against leading nationalist papers like the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta) and the *Hindu* (Madras), which were banned in the States of Patiala and Hyderabad. Despite such odd

provisions, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi continued his successful and forceful advocacy of the cause of the states' people through his paper. A collection of the articles published on states alone can form a historical treatise on the wrongs being suffered by the states' people in the erstwhile Indian states.

Prosecution of Books

The *Pratap* press was fast becoming a publisher and distributer of nationalist literature. Books after books, on jail life, nationalist leaders and Bolshevism were printed and distributed at cheap price. In July 1929, one of the publications entitled *War of Irish Independence* was proscribed, and as many as 166 copies in the stock were seized.

Another book entitled *Martyrs of Kakori Case* also met the same fate. The book entitled *Bolshevik Russia* was still in print and notices regarding that were taken away during search of the press. Shiv Narain Tandon, however, succeeded in publishing one of its pages in the issue of the *Partap* dated 6 March 1930. It was entitled *An Event of the Russian Revolution,* giving a graphic description of the Czar in captivity and surrounding of his Winter Palace. The Bolshevik soldiers were bent upon taking possession of the royal palaces and thus ending the tyrannous Czarist regime. There was also a talk between a soldier and a worker and it highlighted they were responsible to revolution alone.

Action under Press Ordinances

With the launching of civil disobedience movement by Mahatma Gandhi, the Government of India issued as many as seven Ordinances to combat anarchy, terrorism and mass agitation. Two of these related to the Press. The Ordinance No. II promulgated on 27 April, restored some of the provisions of the Press Act on 1910. The U.P. Government had already initiated

action against the leading presses and against even cyclostyled news-sheets like *Satyagraha Samachar*. The *Pratap* press, after the promulgation of the Ordinance II, 1930, was required to furnish fresh security. It was warned for the publication of an article *Sacrifice of Sardar Bhagat Singh* in the issue of 19 April. The editor was summoned by the magistrate on 11 May and warned.

Due to the failure to deposit fresh security of rupees three thousand, the *Pratap* after the issue dated 4 May was closed. It ceased publication for the next six months; i.e., during the pendency of the Ordinance II, 1930. Most of the language papers met the same fate in U.P. The Indian Press Ordinance which lapsed on 26 October 1930 was followed by the Press and Unauthorised News-Sheets and Newspapers Ordinance of 23 December 1930. After its expiry on 22 June 1931 followed the most comprehensive Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act from 9 October 1931.

Closure of the *Pratap* for six months made its financial situation worst. Its editors, joint editors and most of the trustees were in jail, but even then after six months associate editor Prakash Narain Shiromani restarted the paper. He was ably aided by the eldest son of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Harishankar who had left studies due to civil disobedience movement. He continued to pilot the paper till the martyrdom of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, and even after that. The *Pratap*, however, survived the onslaugths under the Press Laws.

III

Defiant Journalism

THE DIFFICULTIES and challenges that the editor of the *Pratap* (Kanpur) had to face were not confined to Press Laws alone, but they went further. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, in his ardent zeal to champion the cause of the poor kisans and to expose the corrupt and tyrannical officers, got involved in contempt cases. He also incurred the wrath of the then officials who constantly tried to seek any opportunity to nab him. Yet he braved all challenges and his paper survived the onslaughts.

First Contempt Case

While publishing reports about the agrarian riots at Rae Bareli, the *Pratap* in its issues dated 13 and 17 January 1921, exposed the misdeeds of one Birpal Singh,* a local taluqdar, who according to the tenants had fired a number of rounds. Six dead bodies were reported to have been recovered from beneath a culvert. There were all sorts of rumours, and published versions varied.

Sardar Birpal Singh was reported to have taken an active part on behalf of and in support of the district authorities. People complained against him. The Government did not pay heed to them and in its communique offered all kinds of defence on his behalf. The editor of the *Pratap* had on the other hand deputed his special correspondent to send first-hand reports, so did not doubt the narrative published. Sardar Birpal Singh took exception to the articles published in the *Pratap* and its editorial thereon.

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*Sardar Birpal Singh, a descendent of Raja Ranjeet Singh, Taluqdar.

He threatened legal action for libel if no apology was tendered. But Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was not to be cowed down; so he had to face the long drawn out Contempt Case at Rae Bareli.

Sardar Birpal Singh filed a contempt case in Rae Bareli Court against the editor and the printer Shiv Narain Misra under Section 500 of the Indian Penal Code. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi replied to his notice that he would file all evidence in the Court and there was no question of tendering an apology. Consequently the case was started on 5 February 1921 and continued for six months. As many as fifty defence witnesses gave their evidence. The list included eminent leaders like Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, C.S. Ranga Iyer, Krishnaram Mehta, Dr. Avantiprasad, Devidutt Dwivedi, Jagganath Prasad Shukla, Rama Shankar Awasthi, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sahdeo Tripathi, Vishambhar Dayal Tripathi, Syed Iqbal Husain and others. Their evidence was recorded till 16 July 1921. The whole process comprised of 62 days of hearing of defence witnesses.

The evidence of Pandit Motilal Nehru was one of the most important ones. According to him on hearing about the incident at Rae Bareli, he had reached the place the very next day and learnt about the firing at Munshiganj from Jawaharlal Nehru and others. All were unanimous that Birpal Singh had a considerable hand in the incident as he was the right hand man of the Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli. People asserted that if he had not been there, the firing would not have taken place. Some policemen also said that the first shot was fired by Birpal Singh although he denied that.

Next to Motilal Nehru, Rama Shankar Awasthi, Editor of *Dainik Vartman* (Kanpur) gave his evidence. He contended that he had primarily come to listen to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's statement and he had not filed copies of *Vartman* in the Court. On 15 July, Madan Mohan Malaviya gave his evidence. It was the 62nd day of the Case. He had visited Munshiganj culvert and found blood stains there, He was joined by Raja

Rampal Singh and met Birpal Singh also who denied that he had fired the first shot. In his statement before the Commissioner, Birpal Singh admitted that he was present at the Munshiganj affairs; but he could not say who fired the first shot. He only fired one cartridge when attacked. According to Deputy Commissioner's report his revolver had seven cartridges, five of which were recovered live and only two had been fired.

The *Pratap* contempt case was defended by Dr. Jaikarannath Misra, assisted by seven or eight leading advocates. There was always a crowd near the court. People came from Kanpur in batches and the case took a political turn. The situation remained tense. The result of the case was anxiously awaited all over the Provinces. On 30 July 1921, Munshi Maqsood Khan the trying magistrate gave his verdict in the case. Both the accused were charge-sheeted under two sections and there was great excitement in Rae Bareli. According to the judgment both the accused were held guilty of contempt and awarded three months' imprisonment and a fine of rupees five hundred each. Both the sentences were to run concurrently. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Shiv Narain Misra were cheered lustily. For some time there was satisfaction in the official circles as their critics had been convicted of libel and sent to jail.

Dr. Jaikarannath Misra showed unusual alertness. Despite hurdles put by the local authorities, he got securities deposited to the tune of four thousand rupees and got both of them released from jail the same day. Both the accused did not favour that they should be got released on bail or any appeal be filed against the sentences in the Chief Court, Lucknow. But their friends and well-wishers willed otherwise and got them released. An appeal was also filed much against their wishes.

The hearing of the appeal by Justice Sherring also took months and on 4 February 1922, he too dismissed that. During this period Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, on reaching Kanpur, got his bail cancelled and courted imprisonment. He was thus already in jail

when the appeal was rejected; so he got the two sentences run concurrently. Shiv Narain Misra, who had been sentenced to three months' jail, got his amnesty due to the visit of the Prince of Wales; so he had to stay in jail only for a few days. The fine-money after being realised from both the accused, was got paid to Sardar Birpal Singh.

The *Pratap* (Kanpur) had to incur heavy expenditure on the contempt case. According to some estimates, it totalled about rupees thirty thousand. The paper, its editor and printer, did suffer a defeat in the court, but in the eyes of kisans and the public in general, they became heroes. The tyranny undergone by kisans in Awadh was made known to the world and *Partap's* stand was vindicated. According to Sriram Sharma, Editor of *Vishal Bharat*, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi fought the contempt case tenaciously as he believed that the cause of the Awadh kisans would go by default. It was said in the bureaucratic circles that *public life in U.P. could not be safe unless the Pratap was crushed.* But Ganesh Shankar was unmoved by such threats and he sacrificed his personal interests and money for the defence of a noble cause.

As already narrated the officials had succeeded in nabbing him under Sec. 108 and he voluntarily obliged them by surrendering. Due to financial difficulties the daily edition of the *Pratap* started on 22 November 1920 ceased publication. Men like Sriram Sharma had to leave the press.

Second Contempt Case

In 1926, the editor and the printer of the *Pratap* (Kanpur) were again hauled up in the Mainpuri Court for contempt. The case was filed by a sub-inspector of police, Sheo Dayal Singh who was notorious for taking bribes in Shikohabad. He used to harass the public like anything. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi took pains to send his special correspondents to investigate matters and thereafter started exposing him. From his point of view there

was a *prima facie* case against him, so he published details in the *Pratap*.

Sheo Dayal Singh got notices served against Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, as editor and Surendra Sharma as printer to appear in the magistrate's court on 12 August 1926. He alleged that the letters published in the *Pratap* against him were forged and so the editor and publisher were guilty of libel under Sec. 500 of the Indian Penal Code. The case was started in the Court of Jwala Prasad, first class magistrate of Mainpuri.

The *Pratap* in its defence filed as many as thirteen specific cases of bribe-taking. As many as 114 witnesses were cited, but later on only 41 gave their evidence. Despite such an overwhelming proof, the magistrate was not convinced of the charges levelled against the sub-inspector of police who was the kingpin of the bureaucracy under the foreign rule. According to him the editor and the printer were found guilty and on 17 November 1926 he delivered his judgment; awarding a fine of rupees four hundred on each and sentences of six months' imprisonment.

It was also mentioned in the judgment that four hundred rupees would be paid to Sheo Dayal Singh as compensation. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi felt aggrieved and said to the magistrate that he had been unjust to him. He was not prepared to pay the fine and would prefer to go to jail in lieu of that. The magistrate was unmoved. The defence case was argued by Babu Kalicharan of Mainpuri and Baijnath. Jaspati Rai Kapur, M.A., LL.B. helped them. The case lasted for eight months and cost the *Pratap* about three thousand rupees.

But Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's friends and admirers in Mainpuri deposited the amount of security and got him released. It was also decided to file an appeal. The fine-money was also deposited and only after twentyfour hours they were again out of the jail. When the appeal was filed in the court of District and Sessions Judge, there was not much change. P.K. Rai, the Judge, in February 1927 upheld the judgment of the lower court and

even recommended enhancement of the sentences by the appellate court.

Due to the verdict of the sessions judge the case went up to the High Court for review and after preliminary investigation, the case was listed before the bench of Justice Walsh and Justice Banerjee. By 28 March 1927 the learned judges concluded that the accused were not guilty and so acquitted them of libel charges under Section 500. They also commented that their being ardent congressmen, did not take them out of the purview of justice and vindication of truth. The editor of the *Pratap* had published the letters and reports against the sub-inspector of police in good faith. Considering the good of the public, they could not be held guilty, so were acquitted of libel charges.

As regards the charges of corruption and taking of bribe, the judges held that the sub-inspector of police had already been investigated against departmentally on as many as four charges; so he should be prosecuted if found guilty. The case should be referred to a Sessions Judge who had no connection with the case. It was reported that the Superintendent of Police stopped his enquiry, the moment the contempt case was filed in the local court.

Echo in U.P. Council

Further details came to light when the contempt case found echo in the U.P. Legislative Council of which Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was also a member. In reply to a question, the U.P. Government stated that the High Court withdrew the direction to take cognizance of the alleged charges and institute judicial proceedings against the sub-inspector, Sheo Dayal Singh of Shikohabad. According to government's interpretation they were merely to be brought to the notice of the District Magistrate; and it was for him to judge on what observations enquiry was to be done and action taken against him.

Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant, leader of the Swaraj party, was not satisfied with government's reply, and he queried whether the Government had granted prior permission to the sub-inspector of police to file the case against the *Pratap*, pending enquiry by the Superintendent of Police. The reply was in the affirmative. He also enquired from the government if the High Court found that the charges were false. To this the reply was that the High Court did not agree with the Lower Court that the charges against the newspaper were not correct. According to the government clarification the High Court did not mention in the judgment that the charges against the sub-inspector were *prima-facie* true; and that a case be started against him in the sessions court. Pandit Pant further queried if the High Court withdrew the direction because of the Government advocate's arguments under Section 476 and 195 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The Government feigned ignorance about all that. As regards departmental enquiry it was pointed out in the House that the Superintendent of Police would report to the District Magistrate and then they would see whether there was any substance in the charges against the sub-inspector of police.

Immediately after the delivery of the judgment in the contempt case, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi felt so mortified that he wrote an article entitled *On the Path of Sacrifice* in the issue of 21 November 1926, under the pseudonym 'follower' with his photograph in the middle. Its text shows how touchy and conscientious he was. But on the other hand he was dedicated to the Almighty, whom he saw in the abodes of the *Dradranarayan* —the poor and the downtrodden. Again and again he wished how he could die or sacrifice for such a noble fight against bribery and corruption. He exclaimed that his only fault was that he raised his voice against injustice, atrocity and tyranny of corrupt officials. Another crime of his was that he had extended his hand for the service of the tortured and exploited. Although he felt so sore, his stand was vindicated when the High Court bench quashed the punishment awarded by the lower court.

Saikheda Contempt Case

Ink had hardly dried on the Mainpuri Contempt Case, when on 20 April 1928, the editor of the *Pratap* received summons for the third contempt case. This time the complainant was Guru Keshavanand alias *Dandi Swami,* Saikheda Godara, Narsinghpur (Madhya Pradesh). The contempt case was listed for 27 April in the Lucknow District Court.

The editor was charged with having committed a libel by publishing a distorted version of *baredada* (elderly) *Maharaj Dhuniwale* in its issue of 25 September 1927. Exception was taken particularly to the three words about the Swami, i.e. *Dhongi* (hypocrite), *Aat-tayi* (tyrannical) and *Jaghanya* (abominable). In the article, evil practices and vulgar rituals performed were exposed.

The publication of the article, it was alleged, affected the prestige of the saint adversely, so he demanded damages to the tune of rupees five thousand. Court fee for the case amounting to rupees two hundred seventyfive was duly deposited. The complainant prayed for a decree of rupees five thousand against the *Pratap* plus damages, expenses, etc.

It was found out that formerly the saint had been known as Swami Bhaskartirtha who had also enrolled himself as a satyagrahi in U.P. He was also known as Guru Keshavananda alias *Dandi Swami*. He lived as a disciple of elderly *Maharaj Dhuniwale* and manager of Saikheda ashram. But due to differences, the disciple, in the article exposed the elderly Maharaj. The *Pratap* cautiously printed the details so that the public in general might not fall a victim to his machinations. But when the article was published, the disciple also turned against the editor of the *Pratap*, alleging that he had published his article in a distorted form which had led to the defamation of his guru.

The editor of the *Pratap* taking entire responsibility on his shoulders even expressed regret but the disciple filed the con-

tempt case on 19 March 1928. The *Pratap* organised its defence; and prepared evidence. But in the meantime Raja Prithvipal Singh of Barabanki intervened, before the court could take up the case, and got a settlement done on 11 September 1929. The complaint was withdrawn, so the third contempt case ended without loss or expenses to the *Pratap* or its editor.

Contempt of High Court

While the Saikheda contempt case was in progress, the *Pratap* got involved in the fourth contempt case in the High Court of Allahabad. It published reports about the riot in Naini Jail on 22 April 1928 and a note entitled "Dublish" (an accused in the Kakori Train Dacoity Case). The High Court of Allahabad treated that as contempt of the honourable court and issued notice against the *Pratap* for contempt of court.

The formal notice was issued on 30 July 1928. The note in the *Pratap* was written under a misapprehension. As an enquiry was being conducted in the Naini Jail regarding riot by prisoners, it was thought to be a departmental enquiry and not a judicial one. So the editor allowed the note to be published. But when it was learnt that the enquiry was being conducted by Magistrate Mahendra Prasad as a judicial one, the editor realised that he had no right to write that note while the matter was *sub-judice*.

As soon as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi realised the mistake, he hastened to make amends. Fearlessly he admitted his fault and explained the situation under which the 'technical error' had been committed. He clarified that he had no desire to commit any contempt of the High Court. He also expressed regret for the error committed inadvertently. When the case came up for hearing on 30 July 1928, the editor conveyed his regrets to the Court and the case was dropped the same day. Thus the *Pratap* was saved from financial loss of punishment in the fourth contempt case.

Resourcefulness

Besides the above-mentioned contempt cases, the *Pratap* and its editor had to face a number of piquant situations. It needs hardly be stressed that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi neither allowed his nor his paper's pride to be lowered. Thanks to his resourcefulness he never compromised the honour of his own and the country. In the words of the great Hindi poet, Maithili Saran Gupta, the *Pratap* as a leading Hindi journal was published with a fanfare of its own and within a short time it became the most representative of Hindi poets and writers. Munshi Prem Chand, it is said, switched over from Urdu to Hindi, under the influence of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who always believed in the proverb, 'example is better than precept'. He patronised young writers, and even revolutionary poets, and published their inspiring poems in the *Pratap*. Although the 'Sword of Democles' was always hanging over his head, he never faltered in his resolve.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was always alert and resourceful. Maithili Saran Gupta had related one interesting anecdote. When he was sitting in the *Pratap* office one day, a person came and talked to the manager of the press, Harprasad Goel. Thereafter he demanded a printed cover (envelope) of the *Pratap* and then got the address of the then Viceroy written on that. As he was known as a writer on Indian states to Guptaji, he grew suspicious and related the matter to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The resourceful editor got scent of the whole matter and decided to get the envelope taken out of the letter-box. It was revealed from the contents of the letter that vulgar and abusive matter was being sent to the Viceroy in *Pratap* envelope, regarding the then princely states so that action might be taken against the paper.

A similar incident has been related by Brindabanlal Varma, which occurred at Agra in 1913. At that time Rabindra Nath Tagore, on having been awarded the Nobel Laureate distinc-

tion, was being accorded a reception. As soon as the distinguished poet said that he was being honoured only when his talent had been recognised abroad, young Ganesh Shankar exclaimed, 'Oh!' The audience was taken aback. But Brindabanlal Varma was very much impressed by the fearless youngman. Subsequently when Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi invited him to become correspondent of the *Pratap*, he readily agreed. According to Dr. Varma, Bhatt used to write under pseudonym of *Golmalanand*, Mannan Dwivedi Gajpuri as *Gadbadanand* and Shri Varma as *Gitpitanand* all three combined, produced humorous articles in the name of *Golmal Karini Sabha*. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi printed off their dialogues without hesitation. At times, sketches and cartoons were also published.

Contacts with Raja Mahendra Pratap

In 1922, the *Pratap* published the text of a letter received from Raja Mahendra Pratap, President, Provisional Government of India, formed at Kabul with Barkatullah as Prime Minister and Obeidullah as Minister for India, expressing surprise on his having accepted the citizenship of Afghanistan. The editor clarified the position by adding that he had only expressed surprise and enquired as to when, and how he had acquired Afghanistan citizenship. Publicity was also given to his book entitled. *The Book of the Religion of Love*. It was also revealed that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had met Raja Mahendra Pratap at Gurukul Kangri, Hardwar, when the latter was staying at Kankhal and undergoing treatment from the famous Ayurvedic Vaidya, Yogeshwar. At that time Ganesh Shankar was a frequent visitor to Gurukul Kangri established by Swami Shradhanand across the river Ganges. It was at that time that Harishchandra, son of Munshi Ram (Shradhanand) met Raja Mahendra Pratap and became his secretary. Raja Mahendra Pratap left Bombay for Europe on 12 December 1914, and Harishchandra a week later. He had promised to send description of Kabul for publication. Ever since this contact, Ganesh

Shankar Vidyarthi developed respect and reverence for the arch revolutionary and continued to publish his letters and articles with his comments in the *Pratap*.

Umbrella for Revolutionaries

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was an idol of the young and they were dearest to his heart. He always liked fearless and cheerful youths. He disliked sad, dejected and down-hearted youngmen. He always exhorted them to be brave, and reminded them again and again that the future of the country lay with them. Although he did not subscribe to revolutionary cult, he treated the boys indulging in such activities as his own boys. And whenever they were in trouble, he was all out to help them.

The *Pratap* office had an inner room, where none could enter or stay unless allowed by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. There are several anecdotes about affording shelters to revolutionary youths. Batukdev Sharma, at one time editor of the *Desh*, was in 1916 working for a monthly magazine published from Bihar Angel Press, Bhagalpur, but secretly for the revolutionary party. When he learnt that he was going to be arrested, he wrote to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, at the instance of Ambika Prasad Sinha, that if he could utilise his services he might print two words in the *Pratap* signifying that his offer was accepted. To his surprise the issue of the *Pratap* (June/July 1917) carried such words and he reached the *Pratap* and was employed. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi showed fearlessness, and when the local District Magistrate summoned him to explain why he had printed such "code words", he retorted that, had he been in his place to harbour an Irish revolutionary, he would have done the same thing. The District Magistrate was silenced. Sharma continued to work in the *Pratap* office despite police surveillance.

In the same manner when Sardar Bhagat Singh, as a young student in the National College, Lahore, was in trouble, due to the insistence of his grandmother for marriage, he found shelter

at Kanpur. He was advised by his professor Jai Chandra Vidyalankar to go to Kanpur and meet Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. He also gave him an introductory letter; so Bhagat Singh left his studies and reached Kanpur in 1924. When Bhagat Singh explained to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi that he had taken oath to serve the nation "bodily, mentally and monetarily"; so he was not prepared to marry, he was given the following advice: (a) "Look youngman, to be a lover of freedom is like becoming a moth (*parwana*), which loves a lighted candle (shamah). After entering the burning flame, the moth never returns to tell other moths that the flame is burning and that they should also join it to burn themselves."

To this Bhagat Singh replied, "I have come here having taken a vow to do and die for my country's liberty."

Thereafter it was said, (b) "For a soldier of the nation, it is necessary that he should be above all temptations, including the temptation for women."

Having listened to the advice, Bhagat Singh is reported to have bowed down and touched the feet of Ganesh Shankar and promised to do what he had been advised to do. In order to prove to be a true soldier, he would take his guidance and would be glad to sacrifice his precious life like a moth (*parwana*).

On further advice Bhagat Singh changed his name to Balwant and joined the service in the office of the *Pratap* (Kanpur). In his spare time, he would study the history of revolutions and also books on socialism. As the *Pratap* office was already a rendezvous for other revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh came into contact with men like Batukeshwar Dutt, Chandrasekhar Azad, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Bejoy Kumar Sinha and others.

While in the service of the *Pratap*. Bhagat Singh distributed pamphlets written by him and others. A four-page pamphlet, dated 1 January 1925 issued under the signature of Bejoy Kumar, President Central Council, but in all probability the

production of Sachindra Nath Sanyal, was widely distributed in Bengal, U.P. and Bihar. It claimed to be an organ of the Revolutionary Party of India. During the Dussehra festival, Bhagat Singh and his five companions proceeded on a mission of distribution of *swarajya* literature published in Hindi in the form of leaflets by the *Pratap* press, Kanpur. He also organised relief camps during the floods of the Ganges in Kanpur in 1924. After having stayed for over two months in Kanpur, he is reported to have been appointed Headmaster of a national school near Kanpur. (Near Aligarh according to Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee).

As the grandmother fell ill after his departure, she expressed a desire to see Bhagat Singh. And due to the great effort made by Kishan Singh and Maulana Hasrat Mohni, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was prevailed upon to persuade Bhagat Singh to return to Lahore, on promise that he would not be forced to marry. Early in 1925 he returned to Lahore, but even after the recovery of his grandmother he did not go back to Kanpur. He had been fully indoctrinated and he decided to fulfil his mission at Lahore.

However, Bhagat Singh remained in touch with the revolutionaries in U.P. and helped in the establishment of the Hindustan Republican Association. Bejoy Kumar Sinha had narrated that the revolutionaries had received Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's blessings ever since the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case. He moved heaven and earth to organise their defence. He even wrote a special letter to the Sessions Judge, Mainpuri to allow the *Pratap* to depute a special correspondent to cover the proceedings of the case. (Appendix-A).

During 1924 and 1925 when dacoities took place at Bamrauli, Bichpuri, Dwarkapur and then at Kakori on 9 August 1925, the U.P. Government was alarmed and indiscriminate arrests followed. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was utilising the services of many of them as volunteers for the session of the

All-India Congress in 1925 at Kanpur, felt deserted. But he rose to the occasion and devoted his efforts to organise their defence. In 1927, when the Kakori case prisoners, were illtreated in jail and went on hunger-strike in jail, he wrote letters to the Home Member, sent telegrams and entreated for award of better treatment to them. When all his efforts failed, he decided to intervene and after visiting the jails persuaded the prisoners to end their fast. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Gobind Charan Kar, Ramdulare, Manmathnath Gupta and Vishnusaran Dublis responded to his appeal.

In the same year, he visited the Central and Borstal Jails, Lahore and met Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, along with Dr. Gopi Chand, Srimati Parvati Devi and Sardar Kishan Singh. He clearly explained his stand by saying that he did not lend credence to offences of violent nature, levied on the revolutionaries, nor support as he was a votary of non-violence. But he was fighting for the removal of grievances of political prisoners undergoing long-term sentences and wanted all to raise a concerted voice against such malpractices against political prisoners. In an editorial dated 18 August 1929, he highlighted the plight of political prisoners who were dying by inches. According to him fasting unto death was equally painful in comparison to be hanged by the noose till one was dead.

On the other hand, he was equally outspoken to the revolutionaries. Before the Lahore Congress session, he addressed them through an editorial dated 1 December 1929, to leave the path of violence and join the mainstream of satyagrahis to attain independence. He wanted them to do or die, rather than indulge in tall-talks. They were advised to leave unwanted discussion on violent and non-violent means and learn to sacrifice for the common cause.

Fight for the States' People

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was one of the earliest votaries

for the safeguarding of the rights of the people living in the States. Their problem was a complicated one and had to be viewed in the light of their past, present and the future. An important article on the problem of Indian States written by a student, published in the issue of *Prabha*, 1 January 1921, which was edited by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Devdutt Sharma, reflects his views.

According to him the then Indian states were an anachronism. So there was no place for them in the country. They had to go. As most of the rulers employed European officers in high posts, they could never safeguard the interests of the subjects. It was clear that these states had no infra-structure to have a reformed administration. In their courts, at every step, the subjects had to suffer humiliation and indignities. They patronised the worst of flattery and sycophancy. They at times had shown indulgence in foreigners and given them precedence over their own subjects. In short, they had thus lost all sense of self-respect and liberty. In actuality there was greater slavery in states than in British India.

In the Indian states there was only one redeeming feature, that was the regard displayed by the ruler for his loyal subjects. But that was actuated by fear of foreign invasion or attack by neighbouring states. As the British Government had guaranteed them protection, they had become oblivious of the cooperation of their own subjects. Their administration had become lifeless.

In some states, it could be said that there was good government, but according to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi that could not be 'a substitute for self-Government'. The states had an oligarchy. In some the power was vested in a few Rajput jagirdars, in others a few Maratha sardars dominated. They had autocracy and a bureaucratic rule; and the ruling houses were given to a life of ease and luxury. The subjects had no say in the administration. Their rights were almost non-existent. At places there were some assemblies and councils, but they had very limited

powers. In most of the states there was no Arms Act; the arms could be kept in unlimited quantity by certain loyal houses. None of the states had any free press. The rulers could not tolerate any criticism. The Indian States (Protection against Disaffection) Act, 1922, safeguarded the ruling princes against any criticism by the Press even in British India.

Having secured adequate protection from the then British Government, the ruling princes were emboldened to form a Chamber of Princes, wherein they could debate subjects of common interest. The ideals pursued by them were poles apart from the aspirations of their subjects. Although they did not command unstinted loyalty of their subjects, the British Government upheld their status and regional rights. They were guaranteed protection and succession rights.

The story of the Indian states did not end there. The very number made them the weakest part of Indian polity. The British government was most anxious to exploit that. So the Indian political leaders could also not remain indifferent. Therefore, they wanted the subjects to become conscious of their rights and fight for them. For that, they had to organise. In order to enable the states' subjects to voice their grievances, the *Pratap* opened its columns for their exposure. Such an avowed advocacy was bound to offer a formidable challenge to its editor from the concerned states or their protectors.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi made no secret of his radical ideas. He held that the organisation of the princes was to be counteracted by their own organisation. The organizers had to be fearless; as who feared could not fight for their rights. In his words the states were not better than the garbage dumps. There might be some gems underneath the dumps, but they had to be unearthed.

However, he explained in the articles that he did not advocate any violent revolution. The states' subjects should launch such a constitutional agitation which could force them one day to

abdicate. Only then the state would become a democrat state and get its due place in the united India. To conceive such an ideal in 1921 redounds to the credit of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who thus became a fore-runner of other leaders in this field. According to him, the rulers need not have any fear regarding their private properties and family; the descendents of Maharana Pratap, Shivaji, Chattrasal, were always entitled to respect from all Indians.

The editor of the *Pratap* laid stress on constructive work in the states as well. It supported the appeal made by Jairam Das Daulatram to secretaries of all states to propagate *khadi* in their states. It emphasised the economic distress and unemployment that prevailed all over the country, which could be alleviated to a great extent by the use of home-spun and handwoven *khadi*. Attention of the states, which had not till then responded, was to be drawn to that programme. In Gwalior State, Khadi Sangh (Association) had been duly established in 1928 and was working satisfactorily.

Apart from giving publicity to constructive programmes in the states, the *Pratap* continued its tirade against atrocities and lapses of rulers. Indecent behaviour of the ruler of Alwar State in England was published in the 18 August 1929 issue; while the police firing in Mysore State was criticised in several of its issues.

The *Pratap* under the editorship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi or under his guidance even when he was in jail continued to meet the challenges from all sides. Its attitude of defiance remained unabated. It was heedless of consequences in championing the cause of the harassed persons even at the risk of fighting contempt cases; corresponding with or giving full publicity to arch-revolutionaries like Raja Mahendra Pratap in exile; providing umbrella to young revolutionaries in India; pleading for their defence and arranging for relief to the families of political prisoners as well as to those of martyrs. In March 1928, Pandit

Nehru sought help from Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in the preparation of a concise statement dealing with political prisoners in India. He wanted to utilise that in getting some money for them from the United States of America.

Knowing fully well that the rulers of the then Indian states enjoyed full protection from the Britishers in India, the *Pratap* exposed their misdeeds and exhorted the states' people to organise agitation against them. All these were no doubt herculean attempts to meet the challenges of the times, and it is really a wonder that the paper survived and its editor continued to rise in the national stature day by day. His was a rare example of defiant journalism under the British rule.

IV

In the Political Arena

IT WILL be no exaggeration to say that politics was ingrained in the blood of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. And having become editor of the *Pratap* , he embarked upon his political career. To begin with he had established the Weekly to exalt and revive the memories of the great hero of liberty, Maharana Pratap. But in contemporary India the first political leader to be venerated by him was Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, whose photograph always hung before his desk. The idol suited him well, as Tilak was both a political leader and journalist, and carried on his public life vigorously, sparing neither the authorities nor his opponents.

After having come out of jail in 1914, Tilak decided to start agitation for Home Rule. Mrs. Annie Besant in an attempt to bring the two sections of the Indian National Congress together, suggested amendment of its Constitution. But Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta opposed the move, so till 1915 reconciliation could not take place. However, when the Congress opened its door to the nationalists and claimed as one of its subjects "the attainment of self-Government within the British Empire by constitutional means", Tilak welcomed the gesture. On 23 April 1916, he started his Home Rule League and attended the Congress session at Lucknow which saw the Congress united again and brought the Congress and the Muslim League together.

In between, Mrs. Annie Besant had also published the manifesto about her Home Rule League. In this she indicated that the object of the League was to begin at once "strong, steady and sustained agitation", in the Press and on the platform. In

her presidential speech at the U.P. Provincial Conference held at the beginning of April, she unfolded her programme. (*New India*, 2 April 1915). By 14 September, she abandoned the policy of 'silence during the war' and blew the bugle for a vigorous Home Rule agitation irrespective of Defence of India Rules. She exhorted the Indian leaders to hold meetings and explain to the masses the demand for self-government for India. She hoped that the Congress session at Lucknow would also formulate a scheme for self-government, based on the labours of the Provincial and District Congress Committees.

With the two Home Rule Leagues in the field, some confusion arose. But both of them came to an agreement about the sphere of their respective organisations. Tilak's League was to confine its work in the then Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh) and Bombay Presidency, and the rest of India was to be under Mrs. Besant's League. During 1916 and 1917 Mrs. Annie Besant's two papers, viz. *New India* and the *Commonweal* raged the battle of Home Rule in India. Her Home Rule League became a symbol of national opposition. It influenced the Nehrus at Allahabad and it fascinated Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi at Kanpur.

Home Rule League at Kanpur

According to an editorial in the *Pratap* dated 24 September 1917, when Home Rule League was started at Madras, the same day its branch was established at Kanpur. In the beginning it had only 11 members. Thereafter the branch used to hold its meetings every Tuesday and discussed important issues. *Swarajya* literature published by the *Pratap* and other sources used to be discussed at its meetings. Number of the members increased day by day.

On 1 July 1917, a general meeting was organised at Kanpur to protest against the internment of Mrs. Annie Besant and subsequently *swarajya* day was celebrated in the city. New

accommodation was obtained by the League branch at A.B. Road and a reading room opened in that. Work began to be carried on smoothly and its delegates attended the U.P. Provincial Conference at Jhansi, as well as the Lucknow session of the Congress. Office-bearers for the next year were also elected. Eratoon became its President, and Paranjpe the Secretary. Eleven members were elected for the Executive, of which Dr. Murari Lal became the President. Paranjpe was the headmaster of a Theosophical High School at Kanpur. Although he was an elderly fellow, young Ganesh Shankar, Shiva Narain and Dashrath bore the brunt of the work being done at Kanpur. They used to read *New India* and *India a Nation* very enthusiastically. A number of meetings were organised at Kanpur and the *Swarajya* day was again celebrated on 16 September 1917. Number of members of the League branch at Kanpur swelled to 300 and apart from editorial work at the *Pratap* office, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi always took active interest in its activities. This was the beginning of his political career.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, as young and enthusiastic editor of the *Pratap* had been publishing editorials, (11 October-20 December 1915) highlighting the importance of self-rule propagated by Mrs. Annie Besant. According to the editor, the Irish people had used the words Home Rule for *Swarajya* and so Indians should not be afraid of making open demand for that. It asserted, when thousands of Indians overseas were groaning under the tyranny of Colonial Rule in Fiji, Jamaica, South Africa and other colonies, that Indians should not be afraid of raising a voice for Home Rule or *Swarajya*.

However, membership of the Home Rule League branch at Kanpur did not deter Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi from toeing independent line about controversies between Mrs. Besant and Mahatma Gandhi. When she interrupted the speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the Banaras Hindu University on 6 February 1916, the editor of the *Pratap* did not approve of her action. According to an editorial dated 28 February 1916, Mahatma

Gandhi was right in asserting that the country should be fully geared up before a strong demand for *Swarajya* was made. However, it explained away Mrs. Besant's point of view that such a thing should not have been uttered before an audience of students, and called upon people to treat that only as an error. In the same manner the *Pratap* steered clear of the controversy between the extremists led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the Bombay moderates, who were reluctant to any radical change in the Congress Constitution.

Lucknow Session of the Congress

In 1916, the Indian National Congress held its plenary session at Lucknow. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, became the President-elect. The *Pratap* through its editorial dated 3 July 1916 eulogised the services of B.N. Dar. It also highlighted the qualities of Pandit Gokarannath Misra, who was elected as Chairman, Reception Committee. When the then Lieutenant-Governor, James Mestor warned him of the law and order situation, the editor of the *Pratap* termed that as unjust and unnecessary. The rejoinder sent by the Chairman, Reception Committee, was published in the paper and termed as appropriate and dignified.

Besides applauding the achievements of the Lucknow session, the *Pratap* carried a full coverage of Mahatma Gandhi's speech at the All-India Common Script and Common Language Conference, on 29 December 1916, which was organised by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi himself. It was at Lucknow that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi came under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi and on the other hand, Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin' came under his. As a result of Mahatma Gandhi's exhortation, Dr. Murari Lal began to take part in active politics at Kanpur and joined hands with Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Through the *Pratap*, both started spreading the message of freedom struggle throughout the province, their main thrust at that time being the propagation of *swadeshi*, spread of *khadi*, provision

of national education and strengthening of the Congress. (Dr. Jawaharlal Rohatgi, *Abhinandan Granth* p.p. 224–25).

Dr. Murari Lal joined hands with Dr. Jawaharlal Rohatgi whose residence at Kanpur became a meeting place for political workers. Leaders coming from outside invariably stayed with him. Immediately after the Lucknow session it was decided to bring Mahatma Gandhi to Kanpur but for his stay no place could be found except the *Pratap* office. So H.S.L. Polak and Mahatma Gandhi came and stayed there. It was there that the delegates from Bihar under the leadership of Braja Kishore Prasad met him again and got a promise of his visit to Champaran. Mahatma Gandhi did not join any procession or addressed a meeting at Kanpur, he only took there a most vital decision of his life. The Champaran affairs secured a priority. over the problem of Indians in South Africa and thereafter he became involved more and more in Indian politics. For the *Pratap* it was a signal honour and it added to the editor's prestige. Thereafter Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi became a kingpin of Kanpur politics.

Political Identity

During 1918-20 Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi made his mark in local and provincial politics. He was all respect for Mrs. Annie Besant and for her Home Rule League, but after the Lucknow session he became Mahatma Gandhi's follower and developed his identity as a Congressite and freedom-fighter.

The *Pratap* had already been championing the cause of the Champaran kisans, working on indigo plantations. When Mahatma Gandhi was served with internment orders in Champaran and he disobeyed them, the *Pratap* gave the events full publicity in June 1917. Its editorial on the role of Gandhiji and the Champaran Enquiry Committee as well as the Europeans Associations, came in for adverse comments. The coverage by Anglo-Indian papers, viz. *The Pioneer* (Allahabad), *Madras Mail* and the *Statesman*, was termed as biased.

Ever since its start the *Pratap* had been exposing the indignities suffered by the Indian coolie emigrants to British Colonies. Indentured Labour was the burning question and Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for Indians in South Africa had attracted attention all over the world. Added to this was the German propaganda against the British Empire and encouragement to seditionists against them. These naturally attracted the youth and the youthful editor gave prominence to the problem. Lala Lajpat Rai's *Young India* and *Reflections on the Political Situation in India*, were popularly read in India as well as abroad.

As Kanpur was fast developing as an industrial town, the problem of mill-workers came to the forefront. When the labourers went on strike at Kanpur, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi became their staunch supporter. He opposed the tyranny of millowners and apathy of the local authorities. As the Amritsar and Calcutta sessions of the Indian National Congress brought Mahatma Gandhi more and more to the forefront, the cause of Champaran kisans, the Kanpur millworkers' demands and the plight of the indentured labour evoked sympathy and support from the Congress as well. Mahatma Gandhi after his very first meeting with Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, became his adviser. On 2 July 1917, while at Motihari he wrote to Maganlal Gandhi that he had heard at Prayag (Allahabad) that the best paper was supposed to be the *Pratap* . He also felt that its editor was "a man of utter self-sacrifice".

District Conference at Kanpur

At a meeting of the Kanpur City Congress Committee held on 9 January 1921, it was resolved to raise a city volunteer corps, which might come handy in times of dire need and also help in organising tehsil level conferences as well as one at the district. A decision to hold a District Conference from 22 to 29 February at Khurd Mahal Park, was also taken. Delegates were to be chosen from villages and wards in the city. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was appointed Convener of the organising committee.

Besides the above, a National Committee of Education and a Panchayat Committee were also formed. Dr. Murari Lal, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Azad Subhani, Pt. Ram Prasad and others were to be members of the former Committee. It was resolved to start a National School and a College at Kanpur. The proceedings were published in the 17 January issue of the *Pratap* under the signatures of Narayan Prasad Arora and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

As a result of the efforts of the Convener, the District Conference was very well attended. Participants among others included Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Purshottam Das Tandon. According to the memoirs of Narain Prasad Arora, although he did practically nothing to organize the District Conference, yet Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi always included his name in the proceedings.

Kisan Sabhas

Between the Bezwada and Nagpur sessions of the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi and Ali brothers toured the country and infused a new spirit in the Indians. The provincial Congress leaders were busy in explaining the resolutions passed at Nagpur. Bihar, Orissa and United Provinces devoted greater attention to the fostering of the *kisan sabhas* or peasants associations. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and others plunged into the movement and exhorted the kisans to fight for their rights. Serious agrarian disturbances took place in the Rae Bareli, Fyzabad, Partapgarh and Sultanpur districts.

Due to the arrest of *kisan sabha* leaders, the movement spread like wildfire in the autum of 1920. Everywhere the oppressed peasantry showed signs of a mass uprising, challenging the oppressive police and even resisting the arrest of leaders. Firing, lathi-charge and arrests became a common feature. The call to

boycott the visit of Prince of Wales in 1921 added fuel to fire and the jails were filled with thousands of volunteers in U.P.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi became the chief spokesman of the movement and got involved in the Rae Bareli contempt case. He also fell a victim to official machinations and was put behind the bars in October 1921. On 14 November 1921, the Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government informed the Government of India that action had been taken against the editor of the *Pratap* of Kanpur, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and its publisher and printer, Shiva Narain Misra under Section 108, Criminal Procedure Code. Mention was also made of the practical difficulties experienced in the *Pratap* contempt case due to the private cases of defamation by officials and publications of reckless statements. However Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi thus suffered his first jail term in 1921.

Jail Life

Having received a diary on 31 January 1922, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi started recording day to day events in the district jail of Lucknow. Prior to that records of his interviews with Krishna Dutt Paliwal and others have been published in the columns of *Pratap*. After his release on 22 May, he wrote in twelve serials, *Glimpses of Jail Life,* and they afford a revealing picture of his first jail life.

In his very first interview with Krishna Dutt Paliwal on 30 October 1921, he felt sore about the government's decision to prosecute him under Section 108 only and not under Sections 124A and 153A. He asserted that if the Government had done the latter, his lawyer would have got the government's order regarding security and personal bonds quashed. According to him the government chose the easier but surer path to keep him in custody.

In addition to his own prosecution Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi questioned the veracity of the then Governor, Harcourt Butler's

tall claim of showing favour to political prisoners. It was in jail that he realised how partial treatment was accorded to political prisoners. He had heard that favoured political prisoners were kept in the district jail while others in the central jail. Along with him were also kept the accused in the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case, viz. Shiv Charan Lal and Ramnath Gurtu of Lucknow. All of them got diet unfit for human consumption. They had also to wear jail uniform and had a wooden plate hung around their neck, which was highly discriminatory and deserved condemnation.

When requested to give a message to his colleagues, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi pleaded that there was no necessity of any message: everybody should continue to do his or her work. He wanted everybody to be cheerful and not to worry about him. Although his health deteriorated, yet after fifteen months of jail life he remained undaunted and defiant. His exemplary courage and spirit of challenge to the repressive policy of the then government was hailed by his contemporary papers like *Sansar* (Benares); *Abhyudaya* (Allahabad), *Calcutta Samachar, Shakti* and *Yugantar*.

Family Worries

As the plague epidemic had broken out in the city, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi became worried about his family members who could not come to see him on 5 February 1922. It was only on receipt of a letter from his wife, Prakash Devi, on 7 February that he felt relieved of the anxiety. However, on 12 February when his wife, children, brother, mother and father came to see him he felt happy. His daughter Bimla and his mother had shed weight and his wife's condition could be imagined rather than expressed. According to entries in the jail diary his wife remained very much worried due to the condition of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's father who had come to Kanpur after retirement. The

aged father was so worried that he wanted Prakash Devi to write to her husband to deposit the security and get released. But there was absolutely no possibility of such a move.

From 20 to 27 March, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had a series of ailments in the jail. He was troubled by cold and headache, followed by bad stomach. First he tried homeopathic and then took allopathic medicines. During this period Dr. Jawaharlal Rohatgi, who was also in jail, extracted one of his teeth and relieved him of one of the ailments. As influenza broke out in the jail, the environment all around caused additional worry to him and he felt uneasy. Despite his ailments, the necessary food items and non-contaminated drinking water were not available in the jail. Lighting arrangements were grossly inadequate. Life in jail became irksome.

Despite personal ailments and family worries, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi tried to enjoy the company of jail-mates, viz. Jawaharlal Nehru, Salamatullah, Shaukat Ali, Balmukund Bajpai, Mohanlal Saksena, Dr. Shiva Raj Narain, Purshottam Das Tandon, Krishna Kant Malaviya, Gobind Malaviya, Kapildev Malaviya and Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman. On 3 March he witnessed in the jail, a unique game of *gulli danda* in which as many as twentytwo persons participated. Among the players could be reckoned Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal and Khaliquzzaman. While recording the event in the jail diary, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi appreciated the sporting spirit with which the political prisoners took the jail life and forgot the hardships as well as physical ailments.

Being himself a strictly religious-minded person, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi fasted on *Ekadashi* day and other such festivals. But when he subsisted only on fruit, he invited trouble. The festival of Holi was celebrated inside the jail with great enthusiasm. Hindus and Musalmans participated in it open-heartedly. The festivities ended with refreshments in the afternoon. The jail diary contains many interesting episodes of occasional

feasts and preparation of special dishes, e.g., on Basant Panchami day. In this way all the political prisoners shared the trials and tribulations of jail life and tried to forget their personal ailments and worries.

Insanitation in jail was very common. Flies and mosquitos were in abundance. Medical facilities for prisoners were grossly inadequate. Quite naturally in such an environment Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's health was badly affected. It was only by chance that Dr. Murari Lal and Dr. Jawaharlal Rohatgi were also among the political prisoners and they gave treatment to their ailing colleagues.

In his serials, *Glimpses of Jail Life,* published in the *Pratap,* Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi refuted the popular belief that the life behind the bars was not troublesome; and political prisoners enjoyed all sorts of amenities.

Release and After

Immediately after his release on 22 May 1922, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi started his political vendetta against the Britishers. In June 1922 when the All-India Congress Committee met at Lucknow, a Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was appointed by the acting President, Hakim Ajmal Khan with himself as Chairman and Pandit Motilal Nehru and others as its members. As a result of its findings, it was reported that the country was not prepared to embark upon general mass civil disobedience. However, limited civil disobedience could be launched. Entry into legislative councils was favoured. It was also recommended that non-cooperators might seek election to municipalities, district and local boards, with a view to facilitate the implementation of constructive programmes. Boycott of educational institutions and the law courts was also favoured. Labour was to be vigorously organised. Boycott of British goods, including foreign cloth was to continue. National schools were to be opened and run with public finances.

In July 1922 when the Satyagraha Committee visited Kanpur, a public meeting was held at the parade ground. Pandit Motilal Nehru delivered the stirring address. He was followed by Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M.A. Ansari. The service rendered by the Congress volunteers at Railway Station, Kanpur and the parade ground was commended. In October 1922 the Kanpur Congress Committee remained active under its Acting President, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Dr. Murari Lal, the President, was in jail. Mahatma Gandhi's birthday was celebrated on 2 October with great enthusiasm.

With the release of C.R. Das from jail in August 1922, the question of the Council entry came to the forefront. The All-India Congress Committee, which met at Calcutta, decided to contest the elections, but the Bengal P.C.C. opposed that. When the P.C.C. decided likewise in U.P., Pt. Motilal Nehru resigned from that. At Gaya Congress, C.R. Das was defeated, so he resigned and formed a new party named "Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj" party. As they were to work within the Conress, a truce was arrived at Allahabad towards the end of February 1923; Council propaganda for and against was suspended till 30 April. Pandit Motilal Nehru in an interview to the Associated Press at Kanpur expressed the hope that the compromise arrived at might work even after 30 April.

National Week

It was decided to observe the week ending 18 March 1923 as National Week. During this period concentrated efforts were to be made for the collection of money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, enrolment of volunteers and the propagation of *khadi*. The 18 March itself, the anniversary day of Gandhi's incarceration, was to be observed as a day of peaceful *hartal* throughout the country. It was on this day that the great trial of Mahatma Gandhi began at Ahmedabad and he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment as his three articles published in *Young India*

were interpreted as causing disaffection. He pleaded guilty. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was very much impressed with his example and decided to make National Week a great success at Kanpur and Fatehpur.

Consequently the National Week was celebrated from 13 to 18 March 1923. Hartal was observed on the last date. According to reports published, 3,900 volunteers were enlisted and a sum of rupees three lakhs and sixty-two thousand was collected. Prior to that, hectic preparations were made to enlist volunteers and political conferences were arranged. At Fatehpur, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was requested to preside. During his stirring addresses, he passionately appealed to people to celebrate the National Week. He expressed in unequivocal terms that he was opposed to all unhealthy dominations, whether of the ruling bureaucracy, or of the zamindar, or of wealthy men, or of the higher castes, which suppressed the legitimate aspirations of the people and helped in keeping them in a state of bondage.

Imprisoned Again

The presidential address delivered by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi at the Fatehpur District Political Conference, was regarded as seditious and tantamount to inciting violence. He was charged with having brought into hatred or contempt and excited disaffection towards Government and he was prosecuted under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. The case was listed for hearing on 14 March but it could be taken up by the District Magistrate, Fatehpur, on 15 March. Till then he was an under-trial, but was denied the facility of cooked food from outside and interview with friends. His beddings, clothes, *charkha* and books, which were in police custody, were not delivered to him. Even his cooking arrangements were not satisfactory though his health was very much indifferent.

On receiving the news of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's arrest at Fatehpur, most of the *bazaars* at Kanpur were closed and a

resolution was passed congratulating him on his arrest. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on a visit to Kanpur, delivered a stirring address at a mass meeting at Khurd Mahal and exhorted the audience to go with celebrations of the national week with vigour. Referring to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, he said, "You have closed your markets on account of the *jewel of your city.*"

But in view of the seriousness of the charge, the family members were so much worried that they advised Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to tender an apology, but the latter declined to do so. On the other hand he cross-examined the C.I.D. reporter and in his written statement questioned the veracity of the report filed in the Court. The reporter admitted that he could not understand Sanskrit words and had not learnt Hindi. He said that he had omitted those Sanskrit words with dot marks in his report. He did not get the speech corrected by the speaker or the audience for want of time.

The magistrate thereafter himself cross-examined the accused, who asserted that the *so-called copy* of his speech, was not correct. The major portion of that was wrongly reported and the general impression was wrong. The magistrate in order to verify, got some of the passages, alleged to be incorrectly reported, written out by the accused. He adjourned the case for 20 March when the accused was asked to file his written statement.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in his written statement said that the version of his speech as reported by the C.I.D. reporter was incomplete, inaccurate and at places absolutely distorted. It was in truth a mass of disjoint sentences, which did not always fit in with one another. The general impression created by that version was misleading. He asserted that he repudiated the charge that he incited the people to violence. He said that nothing could have been farther from his mind than a desire to incite people to violence. He believed that nothing could be more idiotic and suicidal from the national point of view. His conscience was clear that he had no intention of inciting his audience to violence.

But if he actually had left that impression on the mind of even a single individual, who heard him, he would be sincerely sorry. He further said that he would not hesitate for a moment to admit his mistake if he honestly felt that he had committed one. He would willingly retrace and make amends for any remarks which might have been construed, as incitement to violence, for that would be against the principle of the Indian National Congress of which he was an humble but staunch member. He undoubtedly stood for political struggle and he did also believe in non-violence as a religious principle, in the same sense in which Tolstoy or Mahatma Gandhi did.

According to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, violence in the sense of armed rebellion or of causing physical hurt, was not the method which he advocated as suitable to India's political conditions. It would have been foolish and suicidal to even think of that in those conditions. He had said all that merely with a view to satisfy or dissatisfy any one. He expected that the whole political struggle was directed against no quarter from the bureaucracy.

The government pleader tried to establish the prosecution case on the plea of an illiterate audience, the great agitation and the drift of the speech. He extolled in high terms the oratorial power of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. According to him, exciting feelings of enmity to Government was sufficient to make him liable for punishment under that section.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi said in his rejoinder that the government pleader had given a most ridiculous interpretation of his speech and its spirit. His written statement was more than sufficient to save him from the trouble of establishing his case. But the Court was unmoved and was bent upon punishing him.

The District Magistrate sentenced him on the charge of sedition to one year's imprisonment and a fine of rupees one hundred, in default three months' further imprisonment. He was, however, classed as an ordinary non-political prisoner. He was

carried to jail amidst shouts of "Jai". His last message to the people was:

"Let us not be hypocrites."

On the day of judgment, only 15 persons were allowed to be present. This time he was taken to Allahabad and confined in the Naini Central Jail. The roof of barracks, where he was lodged, leaked during the rainy season. Scorpions and centipede fell on the prisoner. However, he braved all the troubles. On the advice of a warder, he started reciting the Ramayana to ward off evils. Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi in his article entitled *Ganesh-puja* published in the *Pratap,* had given a most touching picture of the penance that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had to brave in such a jail, in spite of his frail body. It is said during his stay there he recited the Ramayana eight times and before his release on 29 January 1924 he distributed copies of the Ramayana to the warders. Immediately after reaching Kanpur, he went to Jajmau on 10 February and recited the Ramayana for the ninth time. This incident increased faith in God tenfold, and he started his political activities with renewed vigour.

Bolshevik Conspiracy

On 23 May, 1924, the Secretary of State for India was informed by the then Viceroy that in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, the Sessions Judge, had sentenced Sripad Amrit Dange, Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and Nalini Bhushan Gupta to four years' rigorous imprisonment. Prosecution against Ghulam Hussain had been withdrawn. Owing to ill-health of Singaravellu Chettiar, proceedings against him were suspended. This case had assumed international importance due to political implications.

By July 1924, the convicted had filed an appeal which could only come up for hearing in October before a full bench. Funds for defence were raised in India as well as in U.K. by George Lansbury and other M.Ps. The Foreign Secretary of England

had drawn the attention of his Russian counterpart to financial assistance to the Bolsheviks in India by the Soviet Government. But this fact could not be proved in the Court. Nor could it be established that the conspirators were intending to use violent means. They were certainly preaching Bolshevism, which was tantamount to waging war against His Majesty the King of England. Merely shouting of "Down with British imperialism" was regarded as an offence under Sec. 121A. Pandit Kapil Dev Malaviya and Dr. Manilal arranged defence for the accused. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi through the *Pratap* and its sister publication *Prabha* (June 1924) gave due publicity to the case.

The U.P. Government was scanning all publications regarding Bolshevism at Kanpur. On 4 October 1924, a leaflet in Hindi entitled "Bharat Samyavadi Dal" (The Indian Communist Party), published by Satya Bhushan Socialist Book-shop, Kanpur and printed by the Shakti Press, Kanpur was forfeited under Section 124A, Indian Penal Code. The Pratap Pustakalaya, Kanpur continued sale of such publications as "Doctrines of Tolstoy" and "Jail Life" (Karavas ki Kahani) of freedom fighters and revolutionaries.

In January 1925, another pamphlet entitled "Appeal to my Countrymen" issued under the name of Sachindra Nath Sanyal was forfeited under Sec. 124-A, Indian Penal Code. In the same month a Hindi magazine entitled *Volunteer* edited and published by Todar Singh Tomar, Meston Road, Kanpur and printed by the Saraswati Press, Kanpur was forfeited and made punishable. However, all such forfeitures failed to deter Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi from extending succour to revolutionaries and also publishing Bolshevik literature from the Pratap Press.

With Congress

With the release of Mahatma Gandhi in February 1924, fresh attempts were made to bridge the gulf between the Swarajists and the others in the Indian National Congress. Even C.R. Das and

Motilal Nehru stated that there was nothing inconsistent between non-co-operation and Council entry. They assured Mahatma Gandhi that the moment they found that it was 'impossible to meet the selfish obstinacy of the bureaucracy without civil disobedience'; they would resign from the Councils.

At the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress, Mahatma Gandhi as president, appealed to all the political parties to join the Congress. He was acting as a reconciler and at one time was even prepared to offer leadership of the Congress to Motilal Nehru leader of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly. His franchise resolution was not finding favour and was reversed at the Patna session of the All-India Congress Committee. However, hectic activity continued preceding the next session at Kanpur in December 1925. The Kanpur Congress Committee had invited the U.P.C.C. to hold the plenary session at Kanpur, and the invitation was accepted at the Belgaum session. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was elected Secretary of the Reception Committee. Dr. Murari Lal consented to act as Chairman. Thus both these leaders were saddled with the responsibility to host the plenary session at a critical time in the history of the Congress. In his editorial of the *Pratap* dated 14 December 1924, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi bemaoned that the session was being held with gloomy forecasts.

The Reception Committee had to face unforeseen difficulties in getting a site for the plenary session. The very first site selected at Sisawan landed it into trouble. In view of the proximity to a dumping ground of city's waste and the difficulty in obtaining a good supply of water, the site was abandoned.

Ultimately the choice fell on Tilaknagar where the session was ultimately held after paying heavy compensation to the tenants. Here too the European members of the Trust objected to the holding of the plenary session on the site. Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and Rai Bahadur Anand Swarup helped the committee to secure the site and thus hold the session there. The Chairman,

Reception Committee had to mention in his address (read in Hindi) that the site could be obtained after a good deal of higgling. The Secretary, Reception Committee, also experienced greatest difficulty in recruiting volunteers for the session. Most of his devoted workers being young revolutionaries, were arrested either in the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case or the Kakori train dacoity case. Despite all such difficulties Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohatgi agreed to be in charge of the Volunteer Corps and Gangadhar Ganesh Jog succeeded in enlisting a strong contingent of twelve hundred volunteers. In spite of the bitter cold, they performed their duties sincerely and with rare devotion. The arrangements they made earned praise not only from Mahatma Gandhi but also from Srimati Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru and others.

Arrangements had also been made near the Congress *pandal* for other conferences, numbering thirty. Maulana Shaukat Ali was in dire need for additional tents for the Khilafat Conference, being held at the same time and at the same place. The volunteers were not ready to lend the tents, but Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, much against their wishes agreed to oblige Shaukat Ali who took possession of as many as one hundred and fifty such tents. But he could hardly utilise ten or twelve of them. In this way Maulana was not given an opportunity to put blame on Congressmen, which upheld their higher stature. To make the arrangements a success, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi harnessed all available workers. Gulab Chand Harda was one of them. Sanitary arrangements were looked after by the "Sanitation and Bhangi Department" under the overall supervision of Dr. Murari Lal. He was no doubt helped in the onerous task by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The arrangements made were acclaimed as excellent.

In this most difficult task Rafi Ahmed Kidwai another General Secretary of the Reception Committee always stood by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

The Swadeshi Exhibition was quite good and very popular. On several days, the visitors numbered twelve thousand or more.

The exhibition was declared open by Mahatma Gandhi on 24 December. He agreed to do so on the tacit assurance from Jawaharlal Nehru that there would be nothing foreign displayed there. Gandhiji expressed satisfaction on the quality of *charkhas* and increase in their number, and asked the aspirants to vow to use *khadi.*

Mahatma Gandhi's expectations regarding the Kanpur session were more than fulfilled. He wrote in the *Navajivan* dated 3 January 1926, "The prophets of doom had been active about the Kanpur Congress. If Sarojini Naidu became the President, they prophesied, she would have a tough time with the audience, there would be hardly any visitors at this session, few delegates would attend, etc. But as things turned out, it cannot be said that the last Congress session was inferior to any. In some respects, it was even better than usual." There were 1200 volunteers to work including 120 ladies. A huge *pandal* had been erected to accommodate 15,000 people. There were 2,688 delegates and Reception Committee members numbered 1,287. The leaders were housed in twenty nearby bungalows in Tilaknagar. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was helped by Hindustani Sewa Dal acting under the direction of its chief organiser, Dr. Hardikar.

Besides all this, arrangements were also made for holding the Khilafat Conference, the Communists Meet, the National Language Conference, the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, the Arya Samaj Sammelan, the All India Suddhi Sabha, the Labour Party Meet, the Sikh Dharmik Diwan, the Sweeper Sabha, the Vaish, Tamoli and Rajput Sabhas. The All-India Teachers' Conference, the Kalwars' Conference and the All-India Volunteers' Conference also met there. It is a wonder how such heterogeneous organisations could meet successfully at one place.

Mahatma Gandhi had already written in *Young India* dated 24 December 1925 that the plenary session of the Congress at

Kanpur was "to be a landmark in its history". An Indian woman was for the first time to enjoy the highest honour of being its president. She had already the reputation of a great poetess.

Deliberations

Mahatma Gandhi, however, admitted that Sarojini Naidu would face difficult problems at the plenary session. According to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi the following topics were to attract the foremost attention of the session: (i) Adherence to the spirit of mutual cooperation; (ii) Unity between the various dissident groups; (iii) Propaganda in foreign countries regarding political ideals and programmes; (iv) Propagation of the utility of *charkha* and use of *khadi;* (v) Breaking the torpor and lethargy within the organization. He fondly hoped that the session would mobilise the country's youth and give them a direction. In his view each province needed at least five to six hundred young workers who might do whole-time work in the rural areas and dedicate themselves to the cause of freedom. He also hoped that the year 1926 would be a year of political dynamism and progress, and would kindle the dying embers of the fiery urge for freedom and emancipation.

On 14 December 1925, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi through the columns of *Pratap* addressed the delegates, under the heading "In the Service of the Delegates". Both internal and external problems were crying for a solution. The communal situation in the country was disturbing. In U.P., Bijnor had two free fights between the two communities. In Mainpuri the District Magistrate had to take action under Sections 107 and 104 of the Criminal Procedure Code. In Kanpur and Allahabad, the carrying of sticks had to be forbidden. The atmosphere in short was tense, dark and bitter with unreasoning communal jealousy, suspicion, fear, distrust and hatred.

The Congress Franchise

The franchise resolution passed earlier recommending membership fee of four annas per annum or 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn had evoked controversies. Due to opposition to this resolution, Mahatma Gandhi had announced his decision to spend the year quietly at his *ashram* at Ahmedabad. Although he had also decided to confine his activities to the organisation of the All-India Spinners' Association, yet he agreed to attend the Kanpur session.

Ever since the Belgaum session, the franchise resolution had been objected to. The *Kesari* and the *Lokamanya* both opposed it. They openly criticised it as an infliction which had to be borne as the price of unity between the two wings of the Congress. The Swarajists were vociferous in their opposition. And at the Kanpur session, Motilal Nehru moved that the Congress should approve and confirm part A of Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee passed at Patna on 22 September 1925. The Article VII of the Congress Constitution was repealed and replaced by a new one, viz., (i) Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of four annas per year in advance, or 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn of his or her own spinning, was to be entitled to become a member of any primary organization controlled by a provincial Congress committee, provided that no person was to be a member of two parallel Congress organizations at one and the same time. The year of the membership was to be reckoned from 1 January to 31 December.

Part B laid down that according to the agreement entered into between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru on the other, the restriction on the members of the legislatures would not continue and the Congress was henceforth to be a predominantly political body. The work was to be carried on in accordance with the policy and programme laid down by the Swaraj Party, subject to such modification by the Congress as might be found necessary from time to time.

Achievements of the Session

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in his editorial dated 4 January 1926, himself felt satisfied with the outcome of the plenary session at Kanpur, which had met in an atmosphere of gloom and uncertainty. The programmes adopted for the ensuing year had paved the way for unified action by different sects, groups and communities. The franchise resolution passed at the Belgaum session was suitably amended, and the Congress transformed into a predominantly political body, which it continued till the attainment of freedom in 1947. Prisoners' relief was given utmost priority and a sub-committee formed to collect and distribute funds for the aid of the sufferers.

Pandit Motilal Nehru's resolution had two distinct advantages. Firstly it favoured Council entry and also contesting the elections to the local boards. Secondly, he was for the furtherance of the constructive work in the country and whatever work had been done by the Swaraj Party was to be adopted by the Congress also. The resolution regarding the Constitution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 18 February 1925, at the instance of the Swarajists was to be got implemented. If there was no favourable response, from the Government, all the Swarajists and the Congressmen would quit their seats and devote themselves to constructive work like spinning, temperance, organising the labour and the like. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi felt satisfied and hoped that all the Congressmen would cooperate in that herculean ask.

The main burden of organising the plenary session fell on the Kanpur Congress leaders and they acquitted themselves creditably. Due to the local boards' election in U.P. in December, it became difficult to mobilise workers from neighbouring districts of Kanpur. The financial burden also had to be borne by the Reception Committee. Some of the neighbouring towns rose to the occasion and helped to the utmost. Notwithstanding the slump in the business, the citizens of Kanpur responded to the

call of the leaders, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Dr. Murari Lal and Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohatgi. In the words of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, the fortieth session of the Congress was the most challenging one during the last forty years.

The success of the Kanpur session was another feather in the cap of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. His influence was paramount at Kanpur and he was poised for the U.P. as well as national leadership. The elections to the U.P. Legislative Council in 1926 gave him an opportunity to prove his worth.

V

Social Worker

GANESH SHANKAR Vidyarthi waxed eloquence for the down-trodden, the exploited and poverty-stricken labourers, mill-workers and the peasants. Ever since he entered politics and edited the *Pratap,* he championed the cause of the indentured labour—the Indians overseas who worked as coolies. They were no better than the helots of the British Empire.

Nearer home he was anxious to see the working conditions of the mill-workers at Kanpur, ameliorated. Besides, he had the uplift of the kisans in his mind. He had already championed the cause of the Champaran indigo plantation workers and exposed the unscrupulous methods used by the foreign planters. He worked hard to study the problems facing the kisans in U.P. and developed a liking for the rural atmosphere. He was fed up with the dirty city environments and always loved to walk, or even traverse by *ekka* (horse carriage) to reach the countryside. Due to his professional involvement in Kanpur city, it was often difficult for him to get such opportunities; but he always yearned for them.

Visits to Narwal

In order to satisfy his urge for rural atmosphere, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi started visiting Narwal village, 40 kilometres from Kanpur and 10 kilometers from Sarsaul, the nearest railway station. The atrocities committed by the landlords on the peasants attracted his attention and he was anxious to render service to them. For this purpose, his visits to Narwal became very frequent and he started organising peasants meetings. He started delivering

inspiring speeches there and exhorted the downtrodden peasants to stand up and unite against the landlords. He became very popular in the countryside and a band of devoted workers began to rally around him at Narwal and its adjoining villages. His influence extended to the nearby district of Fatehpur also.

Among his close associates was Shyam Lal Parshad. During World War I, he was a victim of severe beating by the police as he had dared oppose forced collection of War Fund. This news was flashed by the *Pratap* and after a week or so, when per chance he met Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, he was given a pat. Ever since that incident he had become an ardent admirer of the young editor. In 1918 when Home Rule League work was in progress in Kanpur, Shyam Lal Parshad helped him in organising a Home Rule meet at Narwal. Dr. Paranjpe, Dr. Murari Lal and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi attended the big meet at Fatehpur. Thereafter Shyam Lal Parshad continued to render social service and was entrusted with this task in the district of Fatehpur. During 1919 and 1920, he had the opportunity to be elected as a delegate to the Nagpur Congress. And when non-cooperation movement was launched, he became an ardent *satyagrahi.*

After his release from prison in May 1922, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was accorded a mammoth reception at Narwal. According to Dev Vrat Sastri, an old woman was so much enthused that, instead of showering flower petals on him, she covered him with *batashas* (sugar-bubbles). Thereafter, it became a common ritual. After his release in 1924 after his second term of imprisonment, he was again given a right royal reception at Narwal. He had been prosecuted under Sec. 124-A for having delivered a stirring address at Fatehpur Political Conference in 1923. Shyam Lal Parshad had established himself at Fatehpur.

As Shyam Lal Parshad had participated in Bardoli satyagraha, he was regarded an excellent *satyagrahi.* He was also a poet and composed the famous flag song. He also composed a poem in honour of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, which was liked by every-

body. When in 1924, Shyam Lal Parshad was prosecuted, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi pleaded for him and arranged for his defence. Despite all that, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of rupees four hundred.

Training Camps at Narwal

Due to the persistent efforts of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Narwal became a live centre for social, cultural and political activities. Having been elected Secretary of the Kanpur Congress Reception Committee, he felt the need of training volunteers for the session. Narwal suited him well as it was difficult to organise social service camps at Kanpur, in the congested city. It was this training that enabled him to raise a Volunteer Corps of about 1,500 dedicated youths before the plenary session of the Congress. It was also through such camps that he could instill into them a feeling of common brotherhood and they could rise above caste prejudices and untouchability. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi himself set an example of equality among all classes, castes and communities. He often encouraged common kitchens and mass dinners or luncheons. He deprecated hiatus amongst high class and lower classes. He was ready to dine or lunch with everybody.

As early as 1915, when he visited the village Chirgaon of the great poet, Maithili Saran Gupta, he surprised his household by offering to lunch in their kitchen with them. He always fought against such evil prejudices in the villages as encouraged separatism among members of different castes. He never hesitated to drink water or even take food from the hands of the low caste people or persons belonging to other faiths. Once a dancing girl was very much harassed by the local police. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, after long correspondence, got her rescued and allowed her to stay at the *Pratap* office. The workers in the press did not like to drink water from her hands but Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi used to normally do so. If and when opportunity arose he preferred to have inter-community dinners. He often complained that the

Hindu mill-workers, due to danger of being polluted, took only gram with them and thus ruined their health. On the other hand, Muslim workers brought normal meals including bread (chapatis) and vegetables and ate well. They thus maintained their health.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was often very much pained at the plight of women. He was against *purdah* system, he was for their education, and favoured widow re-marriage. When Newal Kishore Bhartiya decided to marry a child widow, he was all praise for him; and the occasion became a great social reform even in the history of Kanpur and the Marwari community. Several poems were written praising him. His *barat* was given a fitting farewell at Kanpur station, and on 29 November 1927, a grand reception was accorded. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi played a leading part in getting this unique remarriage solemnised.

The devoted band of volunteers that he had been able to raise at Kanpur and Narwal came handy to him in his election campaign for the Council in 1926. He was very keen in pushing on the constructive work of the Congress and was personally opposed to Council entry. But when he was pitted against a formidable rival, a representative of the rich class, he fought tenaciously and won. His success was due to his contacts with the common-folk, the mill-workers at Kanpur and the peasants in and around Narwal.

He was an admirer of the spinning wheel. Like Mahatma Gandhi, he regarded the *Charkha* as the saviour of peasants. Ramnath Tandon, being himself a lover of *khadi,* and director of Khadi Bhandar at Kanpur, became Adviser-in-Chief to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

Sewa Ashram at Narwal

Subsequent to the plenary session of the Congress at Kanpur in 1925, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was very much anxious to establish an ashram on the model of Bardoli at Narwal. He had become very fond of the rural environment. Every weekend he

used to go to Narwal by train and *ekka,* despite bad road. Ramnath Tandon often accompanied him from Kanpur.

When the project of establishing a social service centre at Narwal had materialised, he sent for Luxmi Narain Agnihotri and Ambika Prasad Bajpai who were working outside Narwal at that time. As they belonged to Narwal, they were expected to be of great help.

Consequently on 20 February 1929, *Sewa Ashram* was established at Narwal. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi became its President and Shyam Lal Gupta 'Parshad' acted as its Secretary. Besides the President and Secretary, a governing body of nine persons was formed, including Luxmi Narain Agnihotri, Shiva Narain Tandon, Babu Ramnath Tandon, Jayanti Prasad Agnihotri and Thakur Vikram Singh. He was inspired in this work by Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Bal Krishna Sharma Navin, Newal Kishore Bhartiya and others. After its establishment a big celebration took place in March 1929.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarti was so much enamoured with the rural atmosphere at Narwal that at one time he wanted to publish the *Pratap* even from there. He was awfully anxious to promote the use of *khadi* and *charkha.* It was due to his attempts and week-end stays at Narwal that it became an important political centre. In March 1930 when preparations for Civil Disobedience were going on, high officials of the C.I.D. from Kanpur and Allahabad visited that place. In the establishment of *Sewa Ashram,* Narwal, he was very much helped by Newal Kishore Bhartiya who often extended financial help from time to time.

In 1930 the *ashram* provided an excellent training ground for salt satyagrahis. The villagers were taught to prepare salt themselves and thus break the salt laws. As a result of substained activities, the *ashram* provided as many as 400 volunteers who courted arrest, and thus defied salt laws. In March 1931 when Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was released from jail, he was accorded a grand reception. It was the most festive occasion.

Under the auspices of the *sewa ashram* good many reading rooms and spinning centres were opened in the adjoining villages. The motto of the ashramites was self-reliance. The ashram got accretion of land when Bansidhar and Luxmi Narain Trivedi donated their garden. Even Visheshwar Kachi gave 15 *biswas* land in donation for the ashram. Thus the ashram got land for its growth and the running of constructive activities.

After the martyrdom of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, the ashram was developed as a memorial to him. Sri Prakasa and Newal Kishore Bhartiya were head of the committee. In 1934, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation stone of the main building of the ashram at Narwal. A *pucca* well was got built due to the munificence of the mother of Newal Kishore Bhartiya.

However, it was due to the contributions raised for the Kasturba Memorial Fund in 1942-43 and the persistence of Shiva Narain Tandon that a building worth rupees thirty thousand was erected for the ashram by 1946-47. The ashram soon after got an annexe, known as Gandhi-ghar, built out of the proceeds of Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Fund in 1959.

In 1955-56 it was managed by a Society registered under the Society Registration Act. It developed into a live centre for *Khadi-Udyog,* and an Ambar Charkha Centre. Even the manufacture of Ambar Charkhas was started at Narwal; as a result of these activities production of *khadi* increased. In its progress and development the late Har Shankar Vidyarthi, Bal Krishna Sharma Navin, Luxmi Agnihotri, Shyam Lal Gupta 'Parshad', Ramnath Tandon, Shiva Narain Tandon and Newal Kishore Bhartiya contributed their utmost. It was renamed as Ganesh Sewa Ahsram and thus became a living memorial to him. It continued to inspire the constructive workers and has been utilised as a training centre for the presidents of the village panchayats. It has remained as one of the two best memorials to him, the other being Hindustani Biradari. It has survived, although not in its original glory, even though the *Pratap* founded by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi ceased publication after 1964.

Hindustani Biradari (Indian Brotherhood)

This institution took birth in the backdrop of short-lived Hindu-Muslim unity in 1911 to fight British rulers' apathy when plague raged Kanpur, and subsequently communal bickerings in 1913 and 1927.

In 1913 when the *'Comrade'* of Mohamed Ali was publishing articles on *Mischievous Incidents* and *The Atrocities and the British Government,* the Muslims of India were aroused due to the demolition of a portion of the mosque at Kanpur. The *Tauhid* newspaper of Meerut published a booklet entitled *Cawnpur Ki Khuni Dastan*—Bloody Narrative of Kanpur. It was so widely published by the *Comrade* all over the country that the then Viceroy was alarmed. He rushed to Kanpur himself and, in order to pacify the agitators got as many as 100 persons released.

It was only after the outbreak of World War I in Europe and the launching of the Khilafat agitation that Hindu-Muslims were united once again. Mahatma Gandhi forged the unity after Lucknow Congress in 1916. But after the non-cooperation and Khilafat movements, Hindu-Muslim riots again occured in various parts of the country. Kanpur witnessed worst riots in 1927, but due to police action, were soon put down.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was an ardent votary of Hindu-Muslim unity and he showed his exemplary courage in forming their common trade unions in Kanpur. He took the lead in opposing British policies of divide and rule. He opposed imposition of punitive tax. In order to check the widening schism between the two communities, he took the opportunity to convene a meeting of leading Hindus and Muslims in *Pratap* office to discuss the formation of an organisation which could foment common brotherhood. Its motto was that every citizen of India was first a Hindustani and religion was secondary to Indianhood.

Among the votaries of common brotherhood in Kanpur, were Khwaja Abdul Salam, Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin' , Murtaza

Husain Abadi, Newal Kishore Bharatiya and Muhammad Muzaffar Saheb. After prolonged discussions, it was resolved that an All-India Hindustani Biradari be established. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was elected its founder president; and the first convenor was to be Newal Kishore Bharatiya The institution was soon provided with a constitution and the work was started in right earnest. It was the wish of the founder president that Hindus and Muslims should dine together. He even favoured inter-communal marriages, but the time was not opportune for that. The newly formed Hindustani Biradari propagated inter-community meets and conferences. All those, who contributed to the commemorative volumes of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi published by Hindi Bhawan Kalpi, and the *Narmada,* Gwalior, had with one voice praised his ideal of universal brotherhood.

The laudable sacrifice made by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to save the members of the minority community in 1931 Kanpur riots, cemented the bonds of the Hindustani Biradari. According to Newal Kishore Bharatiya, Ganga Sahai Chaube, Khwaja Abdul Salam, and Srinivas Gupta, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was the uncrowned king of Kanpur. His memory was cherished by one and all after 1931. In order to perpetuate his memory, the members of the Hindustani Biradari tried their utmost to propagate his ideals of inter-communal dinners and get-togethers. The institution provided a forum for the meeting of Hindu, Muslim and Christian workers. They advocated national integration in letter and spirit.

In accordance with the ideals of the Hindustani Biradari, a renowned Christian Rev. Manohar Lal became its member and even rose to be its president. Mathura Prasad Bajpai worked as its secretary. After his death, Dr Surya Narain Saksena and Ahmed Husain, B A , became its secretaries.

In 1960, Shri Paripurnanand Verma became its president and is still continuing as such. According to his report published in 1976, during the preceding forty years, none of its members had

been guilty of communalism. For the Hindustani Biradari all its members, irrespective of caste, community and religion are equal. During the British regime this innocent institution was looked upon with suspicion. It was regarded as national and so 'seditious'.

According to its chairman, even after independence, it had not got the importance it should have been given. It was only during the regime of Dr. Sampurananand, Chief Minister U.P., and Hafiz Ibrahim, that the institution got facelift. Consequently in good many districts, like Rampur, Varanasi, Etawah, the district magistrates got its branches opened. But frequent changes at the ministerial level resulted in setbacks to the expansion of the laudable memorial to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

The institution, according to chairman's report dated 22 October 1976, had done commendable work and still continues to do so. It had celebrated Kalidas Jayanti at Varanasi and Ghalib's at Kanpur. It had organised several integration conferences from time to time. It also sponsored mushairas and kavi sammelans. It had been staging one-act plays on Chanakya, Aurangzeb, Eighteen fifty-seven, Shershah Suri and Nawab Wazid Ali Shah; and other such plays. The chairman himself had written most of the one-act plays. According to him even these days, the institution, Hindustani Biradari is busy propagating the ideals cherished by its founder-president, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Its motto still remains that every Indian is first a citizen of India; and religion is secondary. Its members still vow to follow the path of peace and amity fearlessly. Sri Paripurnanad is still optimistic about the fulfilment of its mission and hopes for a bright future.

VI

Legislator

IN VIEW of the compromise arrived at regarding Council entry, the plenary session of the Indian National Congress at Kanpur authorised the executives of the provincial committees to select candidates for the Central Assembly and the Provincial Councils.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had studied the composition of the U.P. Council before and after the 1919 Reforms. He was well conversant with the limitations under which the Council worked. Under the 1919 Reforms Act, elections to the Council took place in 1923 and 1926. Having suffered long imprisonment, Dr. Murari Lal was not eligible to contest in 1923, so Narain Prasad Arora was nominated for the seat. In 1926 Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was the only choice. But he was opposed to Council-entry programme as he thought that one could do more constructive work outside the Council, rather than from within that.

In one of his letters addressed to Banarsi Das Chaturvedi, editor *Vishal Bharat,* Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi plainly wrote to him on 1 June 1926 that he did not think much benefit would accrue by his entering the legislature. According to him, the atmosphere there was so vicious that the common man could not derive any benefit by deliberations in the Council. By adopting the compromise resolution at the Kanpur session, the Congress had done a disservice to the country. He was personally not at all inclined to contest the elections; and would have been fortunate if he had been left out. But the situation was quite otherwise.

At Kanpur very few candidates were eligible. Dr. Murari Lal was already ineligible. Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohatgi also could not

have become eligible as he too had suffered one and a half years' imprisonment. According to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, it was unfortunate that the only candidate, who could contest, was a man who was ready to spend rupees fifty thousand, only to get an opportunity to shake hands with the then governor.

He wrote to Banarsi Das Chaturvedi that the local Congress Committee had with one voice nominated him to contest the election to the U.P. Council from Kanpur. He opposed the move; only Bal Krishna sided with him. Thereafter the matter was considered by the U.P.P.C.C. and he informed the committee in writing that he wanted to be spared. But the U.P.P.C.C. turned down his request and approved his candidature. The decision had even appeared in the news-papers. In spite of all that, he asked for ten days' time to give his final consent. This time-limit was to expire on 10 June. He was face to face with another difficulty. If he did not agree to contest and sacrifice, most of the veteran Congress workers of Kanpur would resign. Therefore, considering the larger interest of the party, he had agreed to contest. He did not believe in the utility of the Council-entry programme. In his humble view, elections were the root cause of Hindu-Muslim differences. Having entered the legislature, one could not be free to serve the common people. He sought advice from his friends so that he might give his consent by 10 June. He requested Banarsi Das Chaturvedi also to oblige him by giving advice in time of distress.

Besides the above-mentioned letter, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi at the U.P.P.C.C. meeting held in August 1926, moved a resolution that under the then prevailing conditions of communal bitterness, running of elections by Congress would be harmful to the best interests of the country. The Secretary, Jyoti Shankar Dixit forwarded the resolution to the Congress headquarters and the same was considered by the Working Committee meeting on 25 August 1926. Earlier six members of the Swaraj Party in the Central Assembly had tabled a resolution requesting permission for a *walk-in* in the Assembly. The matter was fully considered by

a well-attended meeting of the Swarajist members of the Assembly on 24 August and it was settled by a majority of those present though some of the members had already left Simla.

When a controversy appeared in the *Leader* (Allahabad) dated 25 August 1926 that Sri Prakasa had voted against the resolution tabled by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, it was clarified that the former had voted against the resolution, which was ultimately carried by the casting vote of the president, Hasrat Mohani. Although the proceedings were private, he divulged that most of the persons, who voted for Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's resolution, were *actively* working for the elections on behalf of non-Congress bodies. Their desire was that the Congress should not do anything officially. They did not feel that the Congressmen individually were bound not to do so. According to Sri Prakasa this was not honest politics.

Despite best attempts of Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Swaraj Party weakened. Lala Lajpat Rai, deputy leader of the party in the Legislative Assembly resigned. He declared at Simla on 27 August that the Swaraj Party was harmful to the Hindus. Along with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and others he formed the Nationalist Party. Muslims defected from the Swaraj Party and most of the Hindus, elected members of the Assembly, joined the Nationalist Party.

Pandit Motilal Nehru issued a rejoinder to Lala Lajpat Rai. But, when Madan Mohan Malaviya, M.R. Jayakar, Kelkar and Moonje sounded a note of difference, the party split. Kanpur politics was also affected and on 6 September 1926 a Responsive Co-operation Party was formed with Maulana Hasrat Mohani as President; Narain Prasad Arora, M.L.C. became its Vice-President, Chunni Lal Garg, Rais; Babu Dwarka Prasad, Kanahya Lal and Babu Rupchand became its members. The party approved the action of Lala Lajpat Rai in severing connection with the Swaraj Party.

As the next elections were fast approaching, electioneering at

Kanpur started in right earnest. Anand Swarup appealed to the citizens of Kanpur not to allow public life to deteriorate.

Veritable confusion ensued at Kanpur. When Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai were to visit Kanpur, to boost up the candidature of the nominee of the newly formed Independent Congress Party of Nationalists, the local Swarajists also expressed their desire to receive them to muster support for their candidate, viz , Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The rank and file of Congressmen at Kanpur knew not what to do.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya visited Kanpur on 19 October 1926 and addressed a huge audience. He criticized the Swarajist Party and eulogised the large-heartedness of Babu Anand Swarup in withdrawing from the field in favour of Chunni Lal Vaish.

Despite overwhelming odds and division among Congressmen, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was persuaded to file his nomination papers as a candidate of the Swaraj Party. He was thus pitted against the Nationalist Party and the Hindu Mahasabha. His opponent was a capitalist and wanted to win the election with the strength of his money. On the other hand, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi could count on the support of his ardent followers and devoted workers. The streets of Kanpur rang with shouts of "Ganesh Shankar, Ganesh Shankar—Citizens of Kanpur do not forget him!"

Polling for the election was held on 27 November 1926 and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi won by an overwhelming majority. Although the Swarajists fared badly in other parts of U.P., and even stalwarts like Sri Prakasa and Dr. K.N. Katju were defeated, yet Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi succeeded in trouncing his opponent. This victory at the polls raised his status in the political arena and the door was open for him to show his mettle on the floor of the House itself.

The Gauhati session of the Indian National Congress had laid down guidelines for the congressmen in the councils. They were

not to accept ministerships or other offices and also to oppose the formation of a Ministry by other parties. On the other hand, they were free to take steps to get improvement done in the condition of agricultural tenants by getting measures enacted for the fixity of tenure. They were also directed to protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial.

The Swarajist Party in the U.P. Legislative Council consisted of twentythree members and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was one of them. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant acted as its leader. Babu Sampurnanand was also one of the members. But most of the legislators belonged to the class of taluqdars and zamindars and they afforded sufficient matter for Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to comment upon in his paper. Besides reports and proceedings, the paper was usually full of tit-bits about the landed aristocracy in the Council.

The newly constituted Legislative Council met on Monday, 10 January 1927 in the Council Chamber, Lucknow. Rai Bahadur Lala Sita Ram took the oath as Chairman. Then the other members took the oath. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was also one of them and on 24 January participated in the election of the Deputy President, Mukundi Lal.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was an enthusiastic legislator and his performance in the Council from 1927 to 1929 ranked him among the great parliamentarians of pre-independence India. His contribution in the shape of debates, speeches and searching questions, national as well as local, was remarkable. He chose Hindi as the medium and most of his speeches show that he was well-prepared and had worked hard to collect facts. The imposing galaxy of questions that stand in his name covering such a vast range, shows how popular he was. Being an editor of a leading Hindi weekly, with nationalist leanings, he must have been approached by people enthusiastically. And he tenaciously pursued their queries, which elicited from the government revealing information. He relentlessly pursued the path of exposing the corrupt officers and their misdeeds.

During the budget session, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was busy with the interpellation work. It was only in the winter session that he made his impassioned speeches on the Naik Girls' Protection Bill and the Resolution regarding Reclamation of the Criminal Tribes. As regards the first, he at the outset welcomed the Bill and hoped that the Select Committee would when appointed, look into its various aspects. He agreed that the standard of the Naik community could be raised by spread of education. He reiterated what Badri Dutt Pande had said in the House in that regard as the latter had successfully worked for the uplift of the Naiks. In all probability, he and his co-workers had saved half of the girls of the Naiks from adopting the profession of prostitution. He asserted, if the Government had aided such social workers or their institutions, the Naiks would have themselves realised that their girls should not adopt the trade in flesh.

However, as it was thought proper to introduce some sort of legislation to put a curb on that, the same was all the more better. He desired that people should not bring religion as an impediment to such a reform. According to the speaker, so many things were being perpetrated in the name of religion in several countries of the world and India could not fall in line with them. In his view, it was a matter of shame for all and especially for the religion which tolerated such social evils.

He drew the attention of the Select Committee to the provision of eighteen years permissible age in the Draft Bill. He pointed out that there was no restriction for girls of other communities. The result of such a restriction would be that in place of Naik girls, professionals would bring girls of other communities for prostitution. This would be very bad for other communities. Therefore it was imperative that the restriction of eighteen years age should apply to all girls irrespective of community link.

In ancient times, the hills were the abode of saints and learned persons, but in modern times good many people went to the hills only to enjoy themselves. Due to the influx of such people to hill

resorts, there would be the question of demand and supply. So the very purpose of the Bill would be defeated. Therefore, he hoped that the Select Committee would keep this in view. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also regretted that such a disgraceful practice was still in vogue even in 1927; and the sooner that ended, the better.

Reclamation of Criminal Tribes

On 2 November, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was provoked to speak out his mind regarding the reclamation of criminal tribes whose number was over fifty thousand in 1927 in U.P. Out of them hardly three thousand were in the settlements. 3362 people were divided into seven settlements; six of them were under the Salvation Army and only one was run by the Government. He was of opinion that all such settlements should be handed over to non-official bodies. Citing the example of the government-run settlement at Kalyanpur, he said that during 1924-25, per person expenditure came to rupees forty-three, while the Salvation Army had to spend only rupees ten per head. It was clear that money was being wasted at Kalyanpur and government's policy regarding their reclamation was a failure.

As the laws governing the criminal tribes were ineffective, they could never be reformed to be good men. He praised the work done by the Salvation Army which had uplifted them from lower level to higher life of a social being. It was because of that type of work that two or more thousand people escaped from going to jail. He was not afraid of their proselytisation even if they could escape the clutches of the police. He also clarified that the uplift of the depressed classes should automatically be covered by the Resolution, if not then the House might consider that issue also.

It was, however, clarified by the Government that they were willing to consider the offers of voluntary agencies. Two such organisations, viz., *Dilatuddhar Sabha* of Delhi and an Arya Samajist organisation of Lucknow had sent in their applications

to the Government. Concrete proposals were likely to be considered. The then Government was not prepared to take away the settlements from the Salvation Army and their own settlement was expensive. So its promise to consider alternatives was only an empty assurance which could not be implemented.

Contribution Bill

While on two earlier occasions Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi evinced his ardent desire for social reform and uplift of the backward and depressed classes, the debate on the Contribution Bill introduced by the zamindars association, showed his high sense of humour. The Bill aimed at facilitating easy and inexpensive realization of the contribution from the members of the Association of Zamindars on the lines of the British Indian Association Contribution Act. While the zamindars welcomed the Bill, the tenants protested against that.

According to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, as the Association was a voluntary one, it was not clear to him why the government machinery was to be burdened with the work of realizing their contribution. His speech was full of sarcasm. It was clear that, if the Contribution Bill was passed, it would facilitate the realization of membership fee by the Agra Province Zamindar Association. He said, as he was running a small weekly paper, he would be happy if the Government would realize its subscriptions also. His colleague and veteran editor C.Y. Chintamani might become jealous after listening to his words and would prefer if subscriptions to his paper, the *Leader,* were also realised by law. Hence he announced his intention to support the Bill as all those who support that would also endorse the idea of having *Pratap-Leader-Combination Contribution* Bill, being introduced in the U.P. Legislative Council. They would be still more beneficial as their news-papers normally benefited the public by doing great service to humanity through dissemination of news.

Questions and Answers

In the Budget session of March 1927, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's attention in the Council was focussed on eliciting answers relating to questions pertaining to opening of a booking office at the railway station at Mendu near Hathras Junction, disallowing honorary magistrates from standing as candidates for election to the Legislative Council like other paid government servants, prosecution of editors and publishers of newspapers under Sec. 153-A of Indian Penal Code, total number of criminal tribes under surveillance of the police, shadowing of persons by C.I.D. in the year 1926, diet to infirm prisoners, special diet to European prisoners at Christmas, river pollution at Kanpur and Varanasi and police officials stationed at Kanpur.

During the April and June sessions of the Council, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi continued his volley of questions. He enquired regarding the tenure of Nawabzada Ejaz Ali Khan of Muzaffarnagar as special magistrate, cases disposed of by him upto 15 February and related matters. He also wanted to know if the diploma-holders of the Allahabad University in Commerce were recognized as equally qualified as those who had passed their Intermediate Examination. He enquired from the Government if appointment of the Commission to enquire into the official interference in elections of certain districts of Jhansi, Hamirpur and Banda, was under consideration.

The condition of the Massacre Ghat Temple at Kanpur and the Cross thereon, ever since 1857, and its maintenance as a monument in 1927 formed part of another question. Other questions put by him related to prisoners in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, treatment of prisoners on jail holidays, canal revenue rates in Mirzapur; and prohibition of government servants from raising subscriptions from public.

On 24 June 1927, the most important question raised by him in the Council related to complaints against Sub-Inspector of

Shikohabad, Mainpuri. It evoked one of the most important debates in the Council. Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan of Chattari from the government benches and A.P. Dube and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant from the opposition participated. Revealing details were provided and the Government was in the dock; and it held that an inquiry was to be held before the sub-inspector of police was proceeded against in view of the strictures contained in the High Court judgement. It divulged that the sub-inspector was neither suspended nor removed from the district, he was only transferred from the police station. In actuality, he was allowed all facilities to conduct the contempt case and seek redress from the *Pratap* and its editor.

From the questions put by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in the Council, it is clear that he was always anxious to expose corrupt officials and championed the cause of the employees of lower grades. In June and December, he raised the question of high prices, excessive house rents and the inadequate pay of the peons of the Courts at Kanpur. The reply given by the Government stated that the matter was under consideration of the Government.

In October 1927, the stationing of the punitive police at Kanpur and the number of arrests made in connection with communal riots at Kanpur figured prominently in his questions. He was informed that the cost of stationing police for six months was about Rs. 30,000 and the Hindu as well as Muslim inhabitants, excluding government servants, pensioners and honorary magistrates; assistant collectors and munsifs of certain mohallas and parts of mohallas in police circles of Kotwali and Anwarganj were liable to pay that. According to him the imposition of punitive tax on the citizens of Kanpur was an act of tyranny. The riots occurred due to the laxity of the police and the people were subjected to rigours of a punitive tax.

During the ensuing year, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi continued follow-up of his earlier questions regarding pollution of the river Ganges at Banaras and the treatment of mill employees at Kanpur.

As regards the second question, the Government showed some reluctance to interfere in the affairs of private factories as they came under the Factories Act. There was no reply to the specific charge regarding the discharge of 150 persons from July to September 1927 and confiscation of their arrears. His other questions related to the Boy Scouts Association, its office bearers, appointment and removal of the organizing secretary and the position of Katarpur riot case prisoners in jail even after 10 years or so despite provision for remission in sentences.

Another question relating to the Kanpur Improvement Trust was more elaborate and the Government was compelled to furnish details. The approximate area with the Trust was 940 acres. Approximately 1521 houses had been demolished and 1614 built. Due to Rai Bahadur Anand Swarup being on leave the Chief Engineer of the Trust, A. Roland Rice was appointed as Acting Chairman. Questions were also asked regarding the conduct of Avadh Behari Lal, the sale officer of the Trust and his transactions regarding the sale of the land. Although his name was also proposed for the post of Acting Chairman, yet he was not favoured by the majority. So Roland Rice carried negotiations for the sale of the plots at Sarsaiya Ghats in his own way. The irregularities committed by him were laid bare in the House. The plots were never advertised for sale, only sealed offers were invited and even the Board of Trust was not consulted. In this way Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi exposed the errors and omissions of the trust and local board officials. His contribution in this respect was appreciated by one and all.

Even when he was not present in the Council after June 1929, his questions were attended to, specially relating to distribution of *taqavi* to peasants, Trade Union Act, working of the office of the Director of Industries and selection of the Principal of Technical School, Lucknow, The House was informed that Rs. 118 lakhs in 1928-29 and Rs. 33 lakhs by June 1929 had been distributed as *taqavi* to peasants in every district of the province. Parts of the districts of Gonda and Bahraich had been declared

famine-affected and peasants had been provided relief in the form of work and grant.

Resolution on Agricultural Situation

Agriculture being the predominant occupation in the province, on 24 September 1928, Chaudhri Vijai Pal Singh moved a resolution regarding the agricultural situation. It recommended to the Government that effective measures be taken forthwith to relieve the distress caused by the failure of the last *rabi* and *kharif* crops, remit land revenue on a liberal scale and grant adequate help to cultivators in every district. Although the question of *taqavi* was considered, when the supplementary estimates were undertaken, liberal remissions were imperative. The resolution received all-round support in the House. Even the Government was inclined to raise the amount of remission of revenue from twenty to thirty lakhs of rupees.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi made an eloquent speech on the resolution on 24 September 1928. He forcefully asserted that the members in the House had no idea as to the extent of havoc caused to the crops by severe drought. In many places fields had dried up and in thirty-six districts, the cattle had been afflicted with diseases. Shortage of fodder was reported from a number of districts. Prices of grains had gone up everywhere. He said further that Bundelkhand districts were in the grip of severe drought and there was great distress. In Awadh the districts of Sultanpur, Rae Bareli, Fyzabad, Bareilly and Shahjahanpur had been badly affected. In actuality, the whole of the province was affected. The forecast about rains in previous years had been falsified and the agricultural situation was deteriorating day by day. The damage to the crops had been there for the last two years. He had knowledge of some cases in which villagers not having strength to bear starvation, had committed suicide. There were others who had been compelled to sell their daughters for a paltry sum so that

they might pay the rent and thus save themselves from forcible ejactment. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had issued a questionnaire regarding the plight of kisans in U.P. and had received data by 15 June which made his forthright speech well documented.

It was also revealed by him in the House that the concerned officials had at several places erred grossly in estimating the damage to the crops. He cited specific instances of a few villages in the districts of Partapgarh and Jaunpur, which showed how the patwaris, at the lowest rung, gave wrong reports just to please kanungos and tehsildars. According to the information supplied to him the revenue officials deliberately tried to show that the damage to the crops was not great.

In the light of the above-mentioned facts, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, while expressing gratification at the provision of twenty lakhs of rupees for *taqavi* by the Finance Member, said that the same was grossly inadequate. Out of the population of five crores in the province, at least four crores were agriculturists. If the amount of Rs. 20 lakhs was distributed amongst 80 or 90 lakh families, each one's share would be negligible. So he wanted more money to be diverted for *taqavi,* even from big hydro-electric schemes. The situation was so serious that all other projects were to be suspended if necessary to make funds available for the purpose. Besides, there should be remission of rent. Others could benefit if the kisans were prosperous. They were like hens who laid golden eggs.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi while speaking on the Public Safety Bill said that it was based on the apprehension that factory workers might be instigated to revolt against the opulent. But he genuinely thought that the kisans might imbibe the spirit of revolt against the prevailing feudal structure. He was of the opinion that those who were deprived of the means of livelihood, had a right to snatch a morsel from the haves. He warned his colleagues that, if some of them were forced to starve only, for five or ten days, they would revise their concept of the sins of those who were

sitting high and looked down upon the have-nots. Necessity for the enactment of Public Safety Act would only arise if the condition of the kisans continued to deteriorate and they were driven to revolt. He asserted that, if there was any revolt, the responsibility for that would be on the government and not on the poor kisans. The effect of the eloquent speech on the House was electrifying. Speaker after speaker rose to support the demand for more *taqavi*. Rampant corruption among the officials had to be diminished as it could not be rooted out overnight. Badri Dutt Pande once again rose to speak in favour of the resolution and quoted from Bhagwat Gita—Give to the needy, give to the poor. There was none to oppose the resolution and it was adopted after accepting two amendments moved by Hafiz Hidayat Hussain.

Jail and Convict Settlements

During the Budget session of 1929-30, lively debate ensued on the assertion of Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan that jails were a place of punishment and not a place of reformation. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi delivered his most thought-provoking and well-prepared speech. At the outset he pointed out that the condition of the jails was not what it was in 1923-24. In the last para of the report the Inspector-General of Prisons had himself painted a rosy picture by saying. "...convict finds life easy and pleasant in jail. Food is plentiful and wholesome. Clothing is good and discipline is not too irksome, so he has no real grievances". If this was the correct picture, the speaker asserted that some members of the House might be inclined to go to jail again. Although the report had been skilfully drafted, it did not give a correct picture. Conditions in the jail were far from satisfactory and needed reform. The report itself had admitted that the "habitual offenders" could not be reformed. Facilities given there were being withdrawn; as a result of which they would soon become hardened criminals.

It had been mentioned in the report that in 1926 there were

194 convicts facing death sentence. Previously they used to be hanged only in those very jails. But due to revision in rules, they were being hanged at selected places, numbering 13 or 14 in the whole province. The women convicts were hanged only in Fyzabad jail. As a result of these changes, the relatives of the convicts, so hanged, could never reach them in time to have their last glimpse. This arrangement deserved a change.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi further pointed out that arrangements for the supply of books were inadequate. Hardly three or four books were available for 600 to 700 prisoners, those too comprised of the Bible, the Ramayana and the Koran. As regards labour prescribed for prisoners, it had been pointed out that "oil pressing", which had been discarded in Great Britain, continued in India. The plight of convicts, working on "oil presses", in sweltering heat, was worst. Persons, enjoying the cool breeze of fans in the House, could not visualise the hardships of such convicts.

The speaker pointed out contradictions in the report, wherein it had been mentioned that the health of convicts had improved and they had gained weight, which was extremely doubtful. On the other hand, it had been recorded in the same report that "Sultanpur reported the highest number of deaths (48) of these 46 were due to tuberculosis." The Home Member had at one time said that the patients, who had little chances of survival, would be released. He also complained that prisoners on release were not given adequate travelling expenses. He cited the case of one Katarpur riot prisoner who was given a piece of cloth, only half the size of *dhoti,* that too in winter, with inadequate travelling expenses to go from Kanpur to Hardwar, a distance of more than 480 kilometers. The prisoner had been in jail for eight years.

Jail Riots

Continuing his speech, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi mentioned about riots in Banaras and Lucknow Central Jail. The High Court

had in its judgment recommended 'an independent inquiry into the administration', but the Government did not accept that. He also cited the plight of prisoners of Kakori Train Dacoity Case. He wanted the Home Member to state if there was any provision under which they could be included in the category of habitual offenders. According to him, father of one convict sent to his son (Manmath Nath Gupta) three registered letters, but he received reply to none. The Superintendent of Bareilly Jail, did not get the letters delivered. The same was the case of Yogesh Babu whose mother waited in vain for news from her son. As against such deplorable state of affairs, he was surprised to find how a rosy picture had been painted in the report.

The discussion on the Report of Jails Inquiry Committee was resumed again on 26 October 1929. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi pointed out certain salient principles of the report. It stated, "The prison system, while reformatory, must restrain liberty, must act effectively as a deterrent and must also contain an element of retribution. The treatment must in addition be essentially humane and in the main educative." He welcomed that the principle had been borrowed from England and Wales. He said that it was more necessary to reduce incidence of criminal cases rather than effect reforms in jails.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi also cited the condition of jails in the then Gwalior State where not only the number of prisoners had declined, but some of the district jails had also been abolished. He asserted that there was no unauthorised punishment and on special occasions, e.g. ruler's birthday, Holi and Deepawali, the prisoners were given special food. There was arrangement for education of the jail inmates. Professor Kulkarni of the Victoria College used to give lectures to them. Arrangements existed for vocational teaching also so that the prisoners might take up some vocation after their release.

In the end, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi drew the attention of the House to horrible condition of female inmates of the jails.

According to him, the report had not done justice to their condition. He referred to a publication of Pandita Parvati Devi who was confined in Fatehgarh Jail. Harrowing tales of atrocities on female convicts were narrated in it. He quoted from it incidents of caning them and parading them naked. He mentioned about special treatment accorded to European prisoners in case of diet, clothing and accommodation. He criticised the policy of preferential treatment to Europeans. He concluded his graphic narration by quoting Oscar Wilde who wrote about his jail life in the following words:

"We tore the Tarry rope to shreads
with blunt and bleeding nails.
We rubbed the doors and scrubbed the floors,
And cleaned the shining rails.
With slouch and sling
Around the wing
We walked the Fools' Parade.
We did not care
We knew we were
The Devil's own Brigade."

He appealed to the Government to accord the most humanising treatment to political prisoners. He warned that, if it wanted the fight for freedom not to become bitter, it should act quickly. He exclaimed that "the country would rise and rise valiantly". The authorities should not harp on the British Empire which was tottering and was bound to disintegrate. In such an environment when the British Empire was on its last legs, he advised the authorities to give political prisoners a much better deal.

General Administration

When the Council started discussion on General Administration, the question of joint responsibility of the ministers holding charge of Transferred Subjects was raised. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi charged the Member in charge of Industries with

callousness and carelessness regarding the interests of lakhs of mill-workers. He wanted to know from the latter what he had done for the five lakhs of families under his charge. As he hailed from an industrial town, he knew how their condition was worsening daily. The condition in towns of Lucknow, Allahabad, Gorakhpur, Jhansi, Ferozabad and other places was equally bad. In his view, the working conditions in the mills were horrible. In summer, there was no facilities, even for drinking water. He stated that the U.P. Government could make recommendations to the Government of India regarding payment of compensation to workers in case of accidents. Provision could also be made for proper housing, sickness insurance and provident fund scheme. Spirit of communalism prevailing in some of the mills deserved to be put down with an iron hand. Medical facilities deserved to be augmented. Workers suffering from tuberculosis were to be accorded instant treatment. Most of such workers were Muslims and had no means to arrange for their treatment. Some of the factories had improper environment and inadequate fresh air available. If the housing problem was under the Local Self-Government Minister, the Industries Minister could talk to him and the principle of joint responsibility put into practice in administration. With these words Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi supported the motion on General Administration.

By June 1929, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had completed two and a half years as legislator and had made his mark. He himself had attained maturity in the art of parliamentarianism. His questions reflected his fighting mood and inborn desire to serve the poor and the exploited. The answers that he received from the Government regarding distribution of *taqavi* to the peasants, Trade Union Act, etc., fulfilled his purpose to a great extent. When he could not be present in the Council, his job was carried on by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and others who were able to elicit answers from the Government.

A perusal of the questions put by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi shows that they were of far-reaching importance. Most of them

had provincial importance and very few questions were regarding local problems and the *Pratap*.

As the term of the Council was nearing completion and the All India National Congress was debating the question of Council entry, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi again asserted that the entry of the Congress workers to the Lesiglatures had affected the organisation adversely. The leaders were prone to forget the constructive programme which was their primary duty. In view of the prevailing anti-Council entry programme, the Congress members started abstaining from the Council. The main focus of the All India Congress was to declare *Purna Swarajya* (Complete Independence) as the goal at Lahore. Both the wings of the Congress joined hands and vowed to work under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. With the declaration of independence as the goal, the Council entry programme fell into the background. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had his day and plunged headlong into the preparations for the Civil Disobedience movement, if and when launched.

VII

In the Service of Literature

IN THE words of Banarsidas Chaturvedi, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi created good many literateurs, made writers and literary men into budding journalists. Once he queried his friend and an editor of another journal, as to why, in spite of so many years of existence, he could not create even one good writer. His friend had no reply.

In this respect Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was a true disciple of his master, Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, editor of the *Saraswati.* His magazine was many-sided in its interests and was widely read. The *Saraswati* was acknowledged to be the best produced journal of its times, during the eighteen years of his editorship. Dwivedi was identified with the propagation of *Khari Boli* as against *Brij Bhasa.* As a result of his inspiring leadership, there arose an imposing galaxy of poets, writers and journalists, who at one time or the other belonged to the group of the *Pratap* writers. Amongst other journalists, who were making a great contribution to Hindi journalism and the enrichment of Hindi, were Balmukund Gupta of the *Bharat Mitra,* Laxmi Narayan Garde, Baburao Vishnu Paradkar and the Malaviyas at Allahabad. With the emergence of the *Pratap,* Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi came into prominence and then followed Banarsidas Chaturvedi, Brindaban Lal Varma, Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin', Dashrath Prasad Dwivedi, Makhan Lal Chaturvedi and a host of others.

During the early years of the century, the plight of Hindi journalists, much less of literary as well as creative writers, was unenviable. Pecuniary difficulties abounded and government

surveillance of the growth of patriotic literature at every step hampered its development. The work could hardly be remunerative. Working day and night, an editor could aspire to earn only thirty to forty rupees a month. As for the poets, prose-writers and reporters, there was hardly any worthwhile remuneration. Mere publication of one's composition in a journal was regarded as a great achievement.

In spite of the heavy odds and above all financial matters, the editor of the *Pratap* collected around him devoted writers. Amongst the earliest contributors to the *Pratap Weekly* in November 1914, were Brindaban Lal Varma, Shridhar Pathak and Ambika Prasad Bajpai. The poets included Madhav Shukla, Maithili Saran Gupta and others. According to the reminiscences of Brindaban Lal Varma, he was one of the earliest to join as correspondent to the *Pratap*. Thereafter he became one of its contributors. He wrote an article on *Modern Hindi Literature and Nationalism*. He also initiated humorous titbits, as described earlier under the auspices of *Golmal Karini Sabha*. Bal Krishna Bhutt and Mannan Dwivedi lent a helping hand to him. Humour and caricaturing made the paper popular and effective.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi encouraged not only political writings but also literary, including humorous ones. The prose literature was enriched rapidly. By 1921 the producers of the sister publication *Prabha,* entering its second year, under the joint editorship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi could boast of having given to their readers 777 pages of readable matter, 11 colour pages and 129 black and white illustrations. They could rightly claim to have made the articles and illustrations as contemporary as no other journals could do. In procuring the illustrations they had spent more money on sending telegrams and messengers than they could afford to. The illustrations of Punjab disturbances, Amritsar Congress, leaders returning from abroad, atrocities of state rulers, were shining examples. All this herculean effort encouraged the development of Hindi literature.

The January 1921 issue contained poems of Maithili Saran

Gupta, Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin', Bhagwati Prasad Bajpai and an article by Munshi Prem Chand. Other important features were *Flow of Ideas; Focus on Contemporary Literature* and *Editorial Comments*. This standard was maintained and in 1924, when only Bal Krishna Sharma edited *Prabha,* it claimed to be an illustrated political monthly journal, with special focus on Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy convicts. The issue also contained a number of cartoons on 'Khilafat and Indian Musalmans', 'Indian Viceroy and the Chief Justice of U.K.'—'Two faces of the same picture'. Besides that it had articles by Munshi Prem Chand, Ram Naresh Tripathi, Paripurnanand Varma and others. Humour and caricaturing made the contemporary Hindi literature of Dwivedi era, richer and richer. Hindi journalism began to attain maturity under the dynamic leadership of Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

Swarajya Sahitya

Much had been written about the development of Hindi prose, stories, novels and modern poetry, but very little had been said about the production of national literature in Hindi. In this sphere the contribution of the *Pratap* was unique. Editing of a Hindi weekly in 1913-14, with nationalistic stance, was not an easy task. Journals like the *Hindi Kesari* of Nagpur and *Karmayogi* of Allahabad had ceased publication. The tentacles of the Press Act of 1910 and subsequently the Censorship under the Defence of India Rules hung over the head of the editor like the sword of Democles. In such an atmosphere Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's debut as a votary of *Swarajya Sahitya* was simply extraordinary. In the November 1916 issue of the *Pratap* as many as six articles appeared regarding such literature in Hindi. Every special number of the paper came out with patriotic poems, stirring articles and sensational but revealing reports. Subjects like peasants' and mill-workers' plight, indentured labour; Indian overseas, the subjects of the then princely states, social reform, etc. filled the columns of the *Pratap* year after year. Through his untiring efforts, his paper

became a formidable forum for *Swarajya Sahitya*. The speed and rapidity with which this was poured into the hands of the subscribers alarmed the authorities and they tried to put him behind the bars and forfeit such literature.

Mobilisation of the Youth

In order to create and disseminate nationalistic literature, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi needed a devoted band of young and enthusiastic writers. He himself wrote a number of such articles under pseudo names and soon gathered around him persons like Luxmidhar Bajpai and others. Bajpai had thrown light on how in 1914, after he had started the *Pratap,* Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi visited Chittor and stayed enroute at Agra. At that time, he met Badri Dutt Bhatt, Ram Ratan, Brindaban Lal Varma, Bhagwat Narain Bhargava, Thakur Manjeet Singh Rathor of Dehradun; Newal Kishore Bhartiya, Satyanarain Agarwala and others. Banarsidas Chaturvedi also joined him. After their very first meeting with Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, they became his ardent admirers. When he departed from Agra for Chittor, one youth, Krishna Dutt Paliwal accompanied him. This companionship was to be the most outstanding for the next two decades.

Krishna Dutt Paliwal recorded in his article published in 1960 that he had met Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in the office of *Aryamitra,* with Luxmidhar Bajpai. At that time he was a student of Agra College. During their journey to Chittor, he took fancy to him and invited Paliwal to join the *Pratap* (Kanpur) after doing his B.A. When he actually reached Kanpur, he was abruptly told that as he was going to Hardwar for treatment, Paliwal should look after the *Pratap*. Despite his diffidence and inexperience, the editor reposed such a great trust in him. Another young man, Rama Shankar Awasthi joined the *Pratap* and later on edited *Vartman* independently.

The *Pratap* not only attracted Hindi writers, but revolutionaries like Raja Mahendra Pratap, Sardar Bhagat Singh and

Professor Jai Chand Vidyalankar, were also constantly writing either letters to the editor or contributing to *Swarajya Sahitya.* The paper then became popular not only in India but also abroad. The Indians overseas began to subscribe that and thus it began to enrich Hindi literature by contribution from them or about them. Number of its subscribers surpassed that of any other weekly.

Soon the *Pratap* became the weekly of the masses. It reached the hands of peasants of Rae Bareli, Champaran and several native states. Its championship of the cause of the mill-workers, political prisoners and tribals endeared it to them. Those, who had never read ABC of Hindi literature, began to learn the news through its columns. Good many villagers learnt Hindi only to be able to read the *Pratap*. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi always took care that the language of the paper, the articles and reports published therein, was simple and lucid. If some one wrote difficult prose, he would persuade him to rewrite the same in simple words as his paper was for peasants and mill-workers. It aimed at propagation of Hindi. He himself wrote in simple, and commonly spoken language. In this way his leadership afforded the *Pratap* and its Hindi a new direction which set the pace for other Hindi journals also. In actuality, the *Pratap* had become a training ground for new Hindi journalists.

Lingua Franca of India

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had been closely following Mahatma Gandhi's propagation of Hindi as the *lingua franca* of India. In his speech at the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha on 5 February 1916. Mahatma Gandhi exclaimed, "Freedom cannot be gained without literature." People should convey to the masses in their mother-tongue, the advanced thoughts and new ideas which were at that time only available in English. In order to give effect to that he said that it was the duty of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha to translate into Hindi the books available in English.

Subsequently, at the All-India Common Script and Common Language Conference, organised by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and others at Lucknow, Mahatma Gandhi elaborated how Hindi could be learnt all over the country. More and more books were to be translated or written in Hindi. Workers were to be deputed for the teaching of Hindi to non-Hindi areas. He was hopeful that, if the Conference would send out men to teach Hindi, a large number of people would take its advantage. The people wanted *Swarajya* and the way to that lay by way of adoption of Hindi as *lingua franca.*

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi literally followed the foot-steps of Mahatma Gandhi and advocated use of Hindi. He went further by creating *Swarajya Sahitya,* for the permanent enrichment of Hindi literature. He carried further the work started by Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi and attempted national regeneration through Hindi as the *lingua franca* of the country. His was an era of political upheaval and he heralded the renaissance through Hindi in northern India. The poets and scholars made their literary works as the mirror of the society. He got created not only the literature of the hour but literary works for all times to come. The patriotic poems published by him are the real treasure of these stirring times. The vivid accounts published by him of Mahatma Gandhi and himself in jail are thrilling even today. The special numbers of the *Pratap* published every year are pieces of literature. His success consisted in harnessing the best available talents for writing *Swarajya Sahitya,* which is a source of inspiration to free India even today.

Hindi Sahitya Sammelan

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, being an ardent propagator of Hindi, became a frequent visitor to the annual conventions of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. In the issue of 14 January 1917, he wrote an article about the Hindi literature needed at that time. On 20 May, he published an article by Mahatma Gandhi, entitled *Hindi Language and Nagri Script,*

Although the *Pratap* gave due publicity to the activities of the Sammelan, yet if anything went wrong at its conventions, it did not hesitate to criticise it. When some indecent poems were read at the *Kavi Sammelan* at its Annual Convention at Brindaban, he criticised that in the issue of the *Pratap,* dated 17 November 1925. Even when Gopal Saran Singh offered his clarification, the editor persisted in his condemnation of the indecent poem read there.

Thanks to the persistent efforts of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and blessings of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian National Congress at its plenary session at Kanpur adopted Hindustani as the language for day-to-day work by the Working Committee, AICC and the Subject Committee. But there was great divergence of opinion on the subject. When Mrs. Annie Besant's *New India* raised a furore against the decision and dubbed that as communal, the *Pratap* offered a convincing justification. And it cited the example of its contemporary *Hindi Pracharak*, (Madras), which was doing commendable work for the propagation of Hindi in the South.

During the period from 1925 to 1930, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi continued to propagate the use of Hindi. He delivered all his speeches in Hindi in the Legislative Council. As president of the U.P. P.C.C., he made it a point to get the proceedings recorded in Hindi. He maintained his liaison with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, so much so that he was elected president of the nineteenth session which met at Gorakhpur. In his presidential address, he promised to do his best to serve the cause of Hindi language and literature. He appreciated the role played by Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in the development of Hindi terminology so that Hindi could boast of its independent existence. He reminded the audience that foreign domination inevitably led to an assault on the subjugated peoples' mother-tongue and overburdening of its literature with foreign influences. Once the language of the people had been overpowered, their everything was won, and in such a situation creative literature was

bound to be a casuality. This was what actually happened with the advent of the British and the super-imposition of English as the official language as well as medium of instruction. When English displaced Persian as the court language in northern India, Urdu became the common language. So Hindi was forced to face two-pronged opposition, one from English and the other from Urdu.

After the adoption of Hindi as court language in U.P. in 1900, herculean efforts were made to encourage creative literature in Hindi. It was due to the efforts of patriotic writers that nationalistic literature emerged in the shape of prose, poetry, drama, short stories and novels. In this sphere he praised the work of Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Pratap Narain Mishra, Madhav Shukla and several others.

In order to substantiate his point of view, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, cited the example of several countries of Europe, whose history was full of their struggle for the preservation of their own language. Almost all empires, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Austrian and French had imposed their language on the subjugated people. However, it was clear that the emancipation of the national languages could not be achieved overnight. He gave the specific instance of Gaelic language. The Irish people had forgotten their own language, and had begun to regard English as such. But a day came when the Irish people woke up and fought for the rejuvenation of their own language. Eamon de Valera learnt the language from a cobbler because he honoured the study of mother-tongue even more than the freedom of the country. Freedom without the advancement of mother-tongue was a misnomer. Political domination in India always created barriers in the way of the study of Indian languages.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in his address further elaborated that no other language in the world had succeeded in uplifting a community as Hindi had done in the past. It had a hoary past to fall back upon. It had before it the examples of Pali and

Prakrit, through which Buddhism spread outside India and Sanskrit which dominated south-east Asia. Propagation of universal brotherhood was the greatest achievement of these languages. According to the speaker, as the worthy product of Prakrit and Sanskrit, Hindi was destined to play the same role. He visualised that the day was not far off when Hindi would be one of the world languages and might be used in the League of Nations, or such other inter-continental forums. He spoke about the efforts made by him and others for evolving a common script and common language ever since the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916. Mahatma Gandhi blessed that effort. He decried the efforts made in some quarters for adopting Roman Script for the *lingua franca.* It was admitted on all counts that the Devanagri script was not free from faults, but it was also a fact that the adoption of Roman script would obliterate country's own independent existence.

The eloquent presidential address delivered by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi at the nineteenth session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the last that he could attend, was the culmination of his life-long efforts in the service of Hindi literature. The contribution that he made through his weekly, his own writings and his addresses at political conferences and last but not the least his address at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan would ever remain memorable. He was a forceful writer himself and collection of his writings, including translations can serve as a model of Hindi literature.

Although he was not a story-writer, yet the one he wrote in Hardoi jail, entitled *Hathi ki Phansi,* showed that he had the talent to do so. His translations of Victor Hugo's—*Ninety-three*—*Le Miserables,* are outstanding. His own versions of Victor Hugo's *Mirror of State Revolution, Joan of Arc,* Maxim Gorky's *Soldier of the Pen* and *Peter Kropotkin* published by Onkar Shankar Vidyarthi in booklet form in 1976 are a rare example of his versatile talent for writing and ardent desire to enrich literature. He was always enthusiastic about getting the world

classics translated into Hindi. Had he been spared long, he would have fulfilled his mission of life.

As early as 1914, the *Pratap* press started publishing works of leading Hindi poets and writers. Maithili Saran Gupta's famous poem *Jaidrath-Vadha* was one of the first to be printed and was sold for only eight annas per copy. In December issue another poem by him, *Bharat Bharati*, was published. The *Pratap* weekly announced through its columns that its primary aim was to propagate the use of Hindi by all possible means. Having been favoured by Mahatma Gandhi's visit in 1917, the *Pratap* started publishing his articles in May issue and in July 1917 published his *Experiences in Jail*. By October the paper was advertising sale of three other books on *Swarajya* priced at two to four annas only. These publications opened a new avenue for the *Pratap* press; and electrified the whole literary atmosphere. A new wave of revolutionary fervour swept the country.

By bringing out special numbers annually and on such occasions as the fortieth session of the Indian National Congress, the *Pratap* gave an opportunity to renowned Hindi writers to get their poems and articles published. Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin' was a promising newcomer, so much so that even for the Krishna Janmashtami number in 1924, his poem— *Viplav Gan*—a revolutionary song, was printed on the front page. The then editor of the *Pratap*, Bal Krishna Varma wrote on *Purna Swadhinta Ka Prashna*. The special number also carried a one-act play entitled *Bali-Vedi* by Pandeya Bechan Sharma 'Ugra'.

The *Pratap* continued publication of Hindi books during the following years as well.

Leadership in Editing

The *Pratap* had assumed leadership of the Hindi journals and periodicals. By 1930 among the prominent Hindi newspapers could be counted the *Sainik* (Agra), the *Pratap* (Kanpur),

the *Lokmanya* (Calcutta) and the *Vishwamitra* (Calcutta). In November 1926 Banarsidas Chaturvedi appealed to Hindi writers, through the columns of the *Pratap* to help him to bring out each year at least two books in Hindi, in the *Men of Letters* series on the life and achievements of leading but aging Hindi authors on the pattern of English Men of Letters. He also proposed to bring out a *history of editing* in Hindi.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had thus succeeded in creating a spurt in the development of Hindi literature and journalism in particular. He was himself a very conscientious editor. He would not allow any matter to be published, without being properly scanned and edited. Whenever a new and unknown correspondent sent matter for publication, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi got his credentials verified, either through some member of his staff or a friend of his. It was only after that he published the matter.

However, he was always ready to give opportunity to younger editors. Krishna Dutta Paliwal, Rama Shankar Awasthi, Dashrath Dwivedi and Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin' were the shining products of this type of training and inspiration. Even his own son, Hari Shankar Vidyarthi, rose to the occasion and performed the task admirably for some time.

The standard of editing attained by him, despite heavy odds, press censorship, ordinances and the like, won for him admiration from all literary persons as well as journalists. Thanks to his efforts, Hindi literature became enriched. His services to the cause of Hindi literature, Hindi journalism and publication of *Swarajya Sahitya* shall ever be remembered. In the words of the great poet Surya Kant Tripathi 'Nirala' editor of the *Matwala* (Calcutta), "He had a magnetic personality. He contributed a lot to Hindi. It is due to his forceful pen that the subjects of the Princely States were struggling for their emancipation. Ever since '*Pratap*' emerged, a revolution has taken place in Hindi world. The credit for infusing new political

awareness in Hindi journalism goes to him. He is stubborn and fearless; he is a thorn in the way of tyranny and a flower in the path of Peace, he is fighting Captain of the young and a true helper of the helpless poor."

VIII

Multifaced Activities

THE ALL India Congress Committee met in Delhi in March 1926 and decided to contest the ensuing general elections. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's name was included in the list of 26 candidates for local council. There were some differences among the members of U.P. P.C.C. Despite internal feuds in the P.C.C., Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi maintained his hold on Kanpur politics and was elected to the U.P. Legislative Council from Kanpur. There he joined the Swarajist Party and worked shoulder to shoulder with Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Babu Sampurnanand. However, his election to the Council did not diminish his multifaced activities, on the other hand, they increased tenfold. He became more and more involved in the provincial as well as national politics.

Hindu-Muslim Unity

During the summer of 1927, the country was ablaze with Hindu-Muslim riots. The most serious riot took place in Lahore from 3-7 May. Similar riots took place in Bihar, Punjab, C.P. and U.P. The All India Congress Committee organised a conference on 27 October to evolve a formula for Hindu-Muslim unity. It empowered the AICC to appoint a Committee in each province for propaganda work in this connection. The conference after full and frank discussions succeeded in evolving a formula which was adopted with suitable modifications by the AICC which met from 28 to 30 October at Calcutta. It adopted several important resolutions including the one on Punjab communal murders. Thus the work initiated at Bombay was

carried further in the spirit of give-and-take, and solution of outstanding political, social and religious problems was attempted.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi lent full support to unity efforts within the Congress as well as within the community. He wrote a stirring editorial in the *Pratap*, dated 6 November 1927 on the Calcutta Unity Conference.

Trade Union Leader

Interest of the mill-workers was always dear to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. He had already championed their cause on the floor of the U.P. Legislative Council. When it was decided to hold the eighth session of the All-India Trade Union Congress at Gwaltoli, Kanpur, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was elected as one of the delegates from the Kanpur Mazdoor Sabha. Other delegates were Dr. Murari Lal, Shaukat Usmani, Hariharnath Shastri, Dr. Raj Bahadur Gupta, Ramzan Ali, Suraj Prasad, Ganesh Prasad, Mannu Lal and Rajeshwar Prasad. The Mazdoor Sabha also forwarded five resolutions to the Congress.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi enjoyed so much confidence of the Mazdoor Sabha that he was elected Chairman, Reception Committee; and Hariharnath Shastri acted as its Secretary. The Congress met on 26 November 1927. There were in all 125 delegates; but the audience rose to 2,500. The session was attended by a number of foreign delegates viz., A. Purcell, Philip Spratt and Mardey Jones, M.P. They gave valuable support and guidance to their Indian counterparts. Dewan Chamanlal delivered the presidential address.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi welcoming the delegates observed that, though the greatness of the industrial city of Kanpur was due to its labourers, their condition was extremely unsatisfac-

tory. He invited the distinguished visitors and delegates to pay a visit to the houses of the labourers which in Saklatvala's language would in Europe be considered unfit even for brutes. Child mortality and incidence of tuberculosis was very high. The Municipal Board took little interest in the welfare of the mill-workers. Labour representation on the Board was only nominal. They had no representative in the Provincial Council also.

The government had also turned a deaf ear to their repeated demands. It had even expressed inability to investigate the extent of unemployment in the province. Their demand for better housing conditions met the answer that, unless a scheme was put forward, nothing could be said. The Improvement Trust was equally unsympathetic. The mill-owners were oblivious of their living conditions. They had unhygienic conditions in their factories and lighting arrangements were poor. Little care was taken to avoid accidents. The government, he alleged, was antagonistic to the labour movement and its workers were special objects of the attention of the police; and he asserted that the proposed military police in the province was aimed at surveillance of the workers' and peasants' organisation. Dewan Chamanlal commended T.C. Goswami, N.M. Joshi, V.V. Giri, H. Jhabwala and others who stood by the workers throughout the year. He also thanked the British and Russian labour organisations for the assistance they had given to the movement in India and asked the Congress to send their greetings to workers in China, Britain and Russia.

On the second day, A. Purcell, M.P. delivered his address on behalf of the British Trade Union Congress. Thereafter Joseph Hallsworth, who had a great deal to do with international organisation of clerical employees and shop assistants, spoke. He was followed by Mardey Jones who brought greetings from the British ministers who, he said, were the finest body of fighters, labour had till then produced.

Shapurji Saklatvala, M.P. member of the Communist Party of Great Britain also came to India and attended the AITUC session at Kanpur. He had a lengthy correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi and had characterised his theories about "the due share of labour" as reactionary. Besides Saklatvala, Shaukat Usmani of the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case (1924) also attended the session. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi welcomed all with open arms although he differed with them in various ways. As he had been president of the Kanpur Mazdoor Sabha since 1927, he performed his duties consciously. It was due to his inspiration that a weekly bulletin entitled *Mazdoor* began to be published from Kanpur.

Boycott of Simon Commission

The political situation in the country was very fluid in 1927. With the appointment of the Simon Commission, an all-white committee, with no Indian as member thereon, it deteriorated further. The Madras session of the Indian National Congress, which met in December 1927, called upon the people to boycott it. A number of other organisations also joined in its boycott move. With the landing of the Commission in Bombay on 3 Februry 1928, the boycott programme began. Hartal was organised, according to a plan in a number of cities. In Lahore and Lucknow demonstrations resulted in baton charges and assault by the police. At the former place Lala Lajpat Rai was seriously injured in lathi-charge and later on succumbed to the injuries. The boycott at Lucknow was a great success despite massive police arrangements.

The boycott at Kanpur on 3 December 1928 was equally successful. Fifty thousand citizens, young and old, participated. Complete hartal was observed in the city. Students of local institutions boycotted their classes. They also took part in the black flag demonstrations. The *Pratap* in its issues on 3 and 9 December congratulated all the participants and acclaimed— *Well Done Kanpur*.

All passed off peacefully at Kanpur and credit for the orderly arrangements went to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who had taken half of the demonstrators to a public meeting in the city. The rest of the boycotters rejoined the demonstration at Nawabganj. The crowd on the road swelled to large numbers and it became risky foı the Commission members to pass through. So they had to be diverted to the route to the Agriculture College grounds.

This showed that during 1928 Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's influence in the city of Kanpur was uppermost and thanks to the discipline he inculcated in the youth and volunteers, even the demonstrations were orderly as well as regulated. He set a high standard of public life.

U.P. Political Conference

In November 1928, the U.P. Political Conference was held at Jhansi under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Amongst the most important decisions was the formation of a Famine Relief Committee, to go into the pitiable condition of famine-stricken people. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was its president and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi one of the members.

The first meeting of the Famine Relief Committee was held in the office of the *Pratap* (Kanpur) on 6 November 1928. The Committee adopted the following resolution:

"The Commission is of the opinion that due to the damage caused to *Rabi* crop (1235 Fasli) due to the excessive rain and failure of *Kharif* (Fasli 1335) due to drought, majority of the parts of U.P. were in the grip of famine. In view of the dangers inherent in such a situation the Committee has resolved that if the U.P. Government do not grant remission of land revenue to the kisans at an early date, the poor peasants will be hit hard. Therefore, in order to mitigate the disastrous effects of the famine conditions, it deems remission of revenue as absolutely

essential. It hopes that the peasants of the U.P. will receive justice."

By a second resolution, the Committee authorised its President, Gobind Ballabh Pant to correspond with the Revenue Member and the Finance Minister so that necessary orders might be issued to the commissioners and the district magistrates of the province. The Committee by yet another resolution requested the Convenor Secretary of the Committee, Sri Prakasa, might collect relevant data through Congress Committees and volunteers so that the kisans might not suffer due to the intransigence of the patwaris and qanungos.

The Committee further resolved that the Congress members in the Legislative Council might collect valuable information about the plight of the kisans in their constituencies and highlight their grievances so as to get immediate relief. The district magistrates were also to be requested to arrange for the supply of good quality seed as the poor kisans were finding that difficult to obtain. They were also to be directed to arrange fodder for the cattle. The Committee even went to the extent of urging the district boards to make provision in their budget for the relief of needy kisans and also to arrange work programmes on *bundhs* and roads to provide jobs.

In this way the Famine Relief Committee at its very first meeting formulated a laudable programme for the amelioration of kisans in the province.

Political Prisoners

In December 1928 when the Jail Inquiry Committee in U.P. started its work, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi termed it as nothing but drama. Its chairman Justice Stuart had already sparked off opposition from Bar associations of Lucknow, Rae Bareli and other places, during his term of office, so he could not inspire confidence. The two other members Jagat Narain Mulla and

Khan Bahadur Hafiz Hidayat Hussain were not expected to contribute much. Therefore, the Congress members of the U.P. Legislative Council, the Nationalist Party and the U.P. P.C.C. had all decided to boycott its proceedings. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had in the House voiced his opposition to that and when its report was published he commented upon that.

During 1929 the Lahore Conspiracy case prisoners and their plight in jail had attracted great attention. Due to bad treatment meted out to them, they went on hunger-strike. Many political prisoners in other jails in the Punjab and United Provinces also went on sympathetic hunger-strike. The situation became alarming. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi visited Lahore on 25 July and met the prisoners in the Central and Borstal jails. He talked to Sardar Bhagat Singh at length, who told him that he wanted only some rights for the political prisoners. The Government had not only deprived them of their freedom, but also kept them along with thieves, rogues and robbers. No books were allowed to them. They were given dirty and unpalatable food. When they resorted to hungrer-strike, they were forcibly fed; and thus compelled to die by inches. Bhagat Singh told him that they had no trust in the jail authorities who had promised to give them special diet as advised by the doctors. He condemned the attempt to artificially feed them by forcing milk through the tubes in the nose. He exclaimed that they did not worry if death came to them, as they had the resolve to die, while opposing the foolish and discriminatory practice of giving the Europeans and non-Indian prisoners soft treatment.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi also talked to Batukeshwar Dutt and along with Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Srimati Parvati Devi and Sardar Kishan Singh went to see the prisoners in the Borstal jail. There Jatindra Nath Das was found lying in a critical condition. He anxiously tried to get their fast ended as he knew some of them from their boyhood; and he was clear in his mind that the youthful prisoners were fighting for a cause. Explaining his stand he said, "We had cried hoarse for award of facilities

to political prisoners, but we had never fought for removal of grievances of political prisoners undergoing long-term sentences. Even Martial Law prisoners like late Harkishen had been set free but persons like Ratan Chand were still rotting in jail." He commented further, "I do not lend credence to offences of violent nature, levied on these youths, nor support that. I am a votary of non-violence, but those who have the slightest imagination should not have any doubts in their minds. These youths are now hovering between life and death due to some heinous or violent crime. Impressed by their stubborn resolve, we should expect the Government to shed their indifference to their plight and we should all raise a concerted voice against such malpractices against political prisoners."

In an editorial dated 18 August 1929, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi highlighted the plight of political prisoners, who were languishing in the prisons. He asserted that fasting unto death was equally painful, in comparison to hanging by the noose till one was dead. The then Government was accused by him of having discriminated between the various types of prisoners. As a result of criticism all around, on 2 September 1929, a Jail Enquiry Committee was appointed and it made some recommendations, allowing the political prisoners use of a cot, a table, a chair, newspapers and lights. Consequently Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades except, Jatin Das, abandoned the strike. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, however, did not feel satisfied, so he continued his three-pronged tirade against the Government for discriminatory treatment of political prisoners. He utilised the Congress forum; the press and the U.P. Legislative Council for voicing their genuine grievances.

On 4 August 1929, to observe Political Prisoners' Day, a public meeting was organised at Kanpur under the chairmanship of Narain Prasad Arora. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was the principal speaker. The death of Jatindra Nath Das on 13 September 1929 on the 64th day of his hunger-strike, concentrated the country's attention on the treatment of political prisoners.

The All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held at Allahabad on 26 and 27 July 1929 had also passed two resolutions, relating to the political prisoners jailed in connection with the Assembly Bomb cases and Lahore Conspiracy Case. A piquant situation arose when at the AICC meeting Chatwai tabled two resolutions appreciating the patriotic spirit of Bhagat Singh and Dutt and sympathising with them in their hardships which they had been forced to undergo under an alien government. The President of the Congress, Pandit Motilal Nehru disallowed them as being contrary to the creed of non-violence of the Congress.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi did not appreciate the stand taken by the Congress President in declaring the two resolutions as illegal. According to him the sacrifices undergone by the two revolutionaries for the redress of grievances of the political prisoners were hundred per cent praiseworthy, respectful and worth emulating. So the Congress should have adopted those two resolutions of Chatwai. These views were recorded in an editorial in the *Pratap*, dated 7 August 1929.

Secretary Congress Committee Kanpur

Despite differences with the Congress President on some issues, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi remained a true votary of the Congress creed and its constructive programme. In January 1929, he exhorted the people of Kanpur to recapitulate what they had done to implement the programme adopted at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in December 1928. By a special resolution the following ten-point programme was adopted viz., (i) prohibition, boycott of liquor shops; (ii) inside and outside the legislatures, methods suited to respective environments were to be adopted to bring about boycott of foreign cloth by advocating and stimulating production and adoption of hand-spun and hand-woven *Khadi*; (iii) specific grievances to be redressed by non-violent action, as was done at Bardoli, (iv) members of legislatures returned on the Congress

ticket were to devote the bulk of their time to the constructive work settled from time to time by the Congress Committee, (v) Congress organisation was to be perfected by enlisting members and enforcing stricter discipline; (vi) measures were to be taken for the welfare of women and to encourage them to take part in nation-building; (vii) members to rid the country of social abuses; (viii) removal of untouchability and rendering help to the so-called untouchables to better their conditions; (ix) volunteers to take up work amongst the city labourers and village reconstruction in addition to what was being done through the spinning wheel and *khadi* (x) such other work as might be deemed advisable in order to advance nation-building, in all its departments and in order to enable the Congress to secure the cooperation in the national effort of all people engaged in different pursuits.

In order to push ahead the constructive programme at Kanpur, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi drew the attention of political workers to Mahatma Gandhi's article published in the *Pratap* (Kanpur). He exhorted them to propagate prohibition, removal of utouchability, women-uplift, boycott of foreign goods, use of *khadi* and uplift of the downtrodden. Each one was requested to enrol at least five more members and get ready to observe Swarajya Day on 10 March 1929 by taking out processions in accordance with the directions of the Congress High Command. Sundays subsequent to 10 March were also to be celebrated throughout the country likewise. As per directions Sunday programmes were observed in Kanpur meticulously. The Hindustani Seva Dal also succeeded beyond expectations in organizing a national flag day every month. The monthly flag unfurling became very popular.

President of U.P. Political Conference

The next session was held at Farukhabad in 1929. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was elected its President. In his eloquent address he said that they had to ponder specially on two resolu-

tions, viz., (i) proposal to hold an All-Parties Convention and (ii) to implement the constructive programme by the end of the year. He reminded the audience that three months had already passed and only nine months were left to achieve the target. There was every possibility that the Indian National Congress, by the end of the year, might with one voice declare its goal as complete independence. He firmly believed that England would never give India even *Dominion Status* because that would adversely affect the interests of U.K. They should not have faith in its empty promises. England would by itself never give India its independence.

He further exhorted the countrymen to prepare themselves for non-violent struggle. They should do openly whatever they were asked to do. They should gather so much strength that they only forged ahead and did not falter. They should not be cowed down by arrests and governmental intimidation. The British Empire might one day fall like a ripe fruit or die a natural death of an old man. As it had to vanish, the people should prepare to shoulder the responsibilities of independent India. The workers were getting enthusiastic about their rights and demands. They could not brook injustice any longer.

Kisans' Plight

The most significant achievement of Farukhabad session was adoption of economic resolution. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi accordingly prepared a comprehensive questionnaire for U.P. kisans. Their distress had been hightened by the failure of the crops. There was not even enough grain to fill their own bellies and feed their children. He called for replies regarding their plight and the remedial measures by 15 June 1929 so that he could place the hard facts and make use of the data thus collected in the U.P. Legislative Council scheduled to meet at Nainital from 24 June. He used the information thus collected while speaking on the subject in the Council.

Organizational Work

Apart from directing the affairs of the U.P. P.C.C. as its President, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi kept himself busy at all levels. He had activised the field workers receiving training at the Ashram at Narwal (district Kanpur) and exhorted them to spread as members of the Seva Dal into the villages. In order to see that the programme of constructive work was completed in time, he organised the U.P. Youth Wing of the Congress at Lucknow from 23 June. It was decided to hold U.P. Yuvak Sangh Conference again at Lucknow from 18 August.

The items to be discussed at the proposed conference included the plight of kisans and the Nehru Report which was to be accepted by 31 December 1929. The youth was exhorted to rise to the occasion and be ready to make sacrifices for the country's struggle for independence. It was also envisaged that the various youth organizations in the province, viz., Yuvak Sangh, Hindustani Seva Dal, Vidyarthi Sangh, Sant Dal and Sewa Samitis would pool in their resources and work together. All were to unite and form a Workers' Corps and implement the common programme, e.g., establishment of Labour Unions; Kisan Sanghs; Village Organzations; Kisan Aid Committees and Boycott of Foreign Goods Committees.

The U.P. P.C.C. under his stewardship was functioning satisfactorily. Its accounts had been properly audited and found in order. The work of thirtyfour Zila Congress Committees was examined. Ten thousand Congress members were enrolled. Mohan Lal Saksena was deputed to tour Awadh in two months. Sub-Committees responsible for boycott of foreign goods and enforcement of prohibition were found to be working satisfactorily.

Independence Day

The Congress Working Committee, which met on 26 January 1930, after the Lahore session, passed a resolution for adoption

by public meetings all over the country, on *Purna Swarajya*—Independence Day, i.e., Sunday, 26 January 1930. On that auspicious day, the Indian people were to assert their inalienable right to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they might have full opportunities of growth. They were to resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing *Purna Swarajya.*

It was also stated that the civil disobedience was to be initiated and controlled by those who believed in non-violence for the purpose of achieving *Purna Swarajya* as an article of faith. It welcomed the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi and authorised him and those working under him to start civil disobedience. If the leaders were arrested, those who were left behind and had the spirit of sacrifice and service in them were to carry on the Congress organisation and guide the movement to the best of their ability. The All-India, Congress Committee, which met at Ahmedabad on 21 March 1930, endorsed the above resolution of the Working Committee, concerning the civil disobedience. It took note of the Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhi on 12 March 1930, in pursuit of his plan for civil disobedience and to start *salt satyagraha* campaign from 6 April. Soon after the campaign spread all over the country. The U.P.P.C.C. under the Presidentship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi launched a vigorous *satyagraha* campaign.

IX

Freedom Fighter

THE LATTER half of the year 1929 was dominated by Mahatma Gandhi's tour and the ensuing session of the Indian National Congress at Lahore. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was elected president at the U.P.P.C.C. meeting at Allahabad on 10 November. By a special resolution on political prisoners, the Committee expressed regret that the promises to ameliorate their condition by the governments concerned had not been fulfilled, specially in respect of Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners. As the British Government had failed to grant *Dominion Status* to India by the due date, the Committee recorded that the All India Congress Committee at Lahore might decide to launch struggle for independence. The resolution proposed by Mohan Lal Saksena was supported by Pandit Motilal Nehru and unanimously approved. This was the most momentous decision taken by the U.P.P.C.C. under the presidentship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

Amongst other important resolutions adopted at the meeting were, setting of Political Prisoners' Aid Committee with Pandit Motilal Nehru as president and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as its secretary, call to peasants of U.P. to be ready for *satyagraha*, readiness to break salt laws and boycott of Legislatures.

Lahore Congress and After

In accordance with the decisions arrived at Lahore, the following resolution was issued on behalf of the Working Commi-

ttee for adoption by public meetings all over the country, on *Purna Swarajya* Day, 26 January 1930: "We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe therefore that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swarajya* or complete independence..." The declaration of independence as India's creed resounded all over the world wherever Indians were living.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi through the columns of the *Pratap* dated 5 January 1930 announced that independence day was to be celebrated on 26 January. Ideal of *Purna Swarajya* was to be proclaimed and independence pledge taken by all. Flag hoisting was to be done at 8.00 a.m. and processions were to be taken out thereafter. A solemn pledge 'to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing *Purna Swarajya*' was to be taken. In the words of Pandit Nehru, the die had been cast and there was no alternative for India but to fight on till independence was achieved.

Consequently at Kanpur the day was celebrated with unprecedented enthusiasm. In the afternoon a huge procession, led by Bal Krishna Sharma, was taken out from the Shradhanand Park. It comprised of fifty thousand people and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Dr. Murari Lal, Narain Prasad Arora, Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohatgi and Maulana Hasrat Mohani supervised various sections of the procession. In the evening there was a mass meeting at Shradhanand Park when resolutions were adopted and the pledge taken.

U.P. P.C.C. Meeting at Allahabad

The Congress Working Committee at its meeting held at Sabarmati, on 14 February 1930, resolved that civil disobedience was to be initiated and controlled by those who believed in non-violence for the purpose of achieving *Purna Swarajya*, as an article of faith. It welcomed the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi and authorised him and those working with him to start civil disobedience as and when they desired and in the manner and to the extent they decided.

The U.P. P.C.C. at its meeting held on 26 February 1930, under the presidentship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi also decided to recommend to the Congress Working Committee that Mahatma Gandhi be authorised to start civil disobedience movement and U.P. P.C.C. would lend him utmost support and cooperation. The Council further authorised the Executive Committee to decide as to when and how the civil disobedience movement in the U.P. was to be started so that the mass movement might be strengthened. Another important resolution concerning the economic programme for the nation was moved by Pandit Nehru, and was referred to its Council for consideration.

Satyagraha in U.P.

It had already been decided that the Conference would be held at Kanpur in April 1930. Preparations were afoot in every district of the province for launching civil disobedience in U.P. By first week of April, the *satyagraha* had started in the province. The President of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for disobedience of the salt laws at Allahabad on 14 April and many other arrests took place. At Kanpur G.G. Jog led the *satyagrahis* on 5 April and prepared salt. An audience of fifteen thousand was addressed by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Agitation was intensified. Harihar Nath Sastri was arrested on 9 April and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On 12 April,

Bal Krishna Sharma was arrested and awarded six months' imprisonment.

On 12 April 1930, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi on behalf of the Provincial Satyagraha Committee issued an appeal to the *satyagrahis* to remain peaceful and disciplined. Collection of too many people was to be avoided. *Satyagraha* in batches by smaller number of volunteers, in a disciplined manner, was to prove more effective. This appeal was based on the decisions arrived at earlier by the U.P. Satyagraha Committee held at Rae Bareli under the Presidentship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sri Prakasa and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai were also present at this meeting. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as a true freedom fighter, was in the fittest position to issue an appeal to all *satyagrahis* in the province. The same was published by the *Pratap*, dated 20 April 1930.

The U.P. P.C.C. met again on 18 April i.e., on the eve of the Political Conference and passed important resolutions on educational camps where *satyagrahis* were to be trained, salt *satyagraha*, boycott of foreign cloth and picktting at liquor shops.

Pandit Motilal Nehru and Madan Mohan Malaviya also came to Kanpur. Some people wanted to postpone action on the boycott situation. But the U.P. P.C.C. opposed any compromise. On the other hand the president laid down instructions as to how the work was to be carried on with full vigour. In order to make salt *satyagraha* effective, it was deemed essential that *satyagrahis* should move towards the village and break salt law there. He exhorted the women to also come forward, and directed all units to send reports of *satyagraha* campaigns and breaking of salt laws to the president at the *Pratap* office, Kanpur. These resolutions along with his appeal were published in the issue of the *Pratap*, dated 27 April 1930 under the authority of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Although information reached *Pratap* office from all over the province, yet good many telegrams, as well as information letters were withheld by the police. The editor informed and cautioned the public against that.

In order to highlight the significance of the breaking of the salt law, the editor of the *Pratap* wrote a most thought-provoking editorial, entitled *End of the Salt Laws*. It proclaimed that the salt law then remained only in the Statute Book, it had no relevance in the country. Even preparation of salt from sea water or earth had become a crime. Although the maximum punishment that could be awarded was only six months, other clauses of the Indian Penal Code could also be invoked to award punishments upto two or three years. Crime was one, but punishments awarded could be different. It appeared to the editor that perhaps the trying magistrates had taken intoxicant (*bhang*). But the then official records show that the U.P. Government had made meticulous preparations to award deterrent punishments.

The districts where the demonstrations had been most serious were Agra, Allahabad, Rae Bareli, Kanpur, Lucknow, Banaras and Meerut. Politicians and agitators concentrated mostly at the district headquarters. Only Rae Bareli was an exception, as according to the police report that district had been "picked out by the Provincial Congress Committee" of which Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was the president, "as the chief centre for agitation". This was attributed to the discontent that prevailed among the tenants of that district against the landholders.

Although salt manufactured hastily was not of marketable value, yet for the special circumstances in which that was made, it fetched fancy prices at some of the demonstration centres. U.P. Government's policy was to confiscate illicit salt and procecute the leading offenders and to press for the maximum sentence of six months' imprisonment under the salt act. But a number of prominent leaders were prosecuted under Section 117, Indian Penal Code under which the maximum sentence was three years' imprisonment. Till 21 April 1930, Mohan Lal Saksena, Sampurnanand and Chaudhri Raghubir Narayan Singh had been sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment. Sampurnanand was awarded a fine of Rs. 200 in addition to the above sentence.

In spite of all the preparations for punishment by the U.P. government, the Political Conference was held at Kanpur from 21 April 1930. The U.P. P.C.C. also met at Kanpur. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi played a leading part and the government took serious note of that. In an editorial after giving full details of its proceedings he exclaimed that the struggle for freedom was 'a cold war'. The world had witnessed bloody wars, but at that time it was witnessing for the first time the cold war launched by Mahatma Gandhi. At places people had behaved with commendable discipline and exemplary calm. The government was trying to revive peace committees. The then Governor Sir Malcolm Hailey was himself touring the districts, but the tempo of *satyagraha* was mounting. Boycott of foreign cloth was in full swing.

According to a detailed note prepared by Dodd, the Inspector General of Police, U.P., after an extensive tour of the districts, it was revealed that the wave of national enthusiasm was widespread but confined to only a small class. Due to an aftermath of arrests and resistance to authority in the shape of breaking of salt laws, there could be no perfect peace. The chief visible indication of the extent to which the Congress creed had permeated a town or area was evident from the number of Gandhi caps and more particularly of national flags. The latter was the more important emblem.

It was, however, recorded that by and large, the enthusiasm for the Congress and the *satyagraha* launched by it, in cities, apart from picketing of schools, was subsiding considerably. According to Dodd, the one exception was Kanpur, where undoubtedly the movement was "more firmly established than in any other city in the province". He stated, "In fact, the situation in Cawnpore, in my opinion, is foreign to the general situation in the United Provinces." This was indeed a signal tribute to the great influence wielded by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in his home-town and district.

Besides the above, Dodd also indicated, that, the Congress had directed its attention more to the rural areas. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as dictator of *satyagraha* had made a special thrust in the direction. It was further recorded by the Inspector General of Police that "there can be no question however that despite the fact that practically all the leaders both at the head-quarters and in the towns are in jail, *the organization is still good*, discipline much better than could have been expected, and in taking action there is still considerable determination, courage is lacking and a very little firmness is required to deal with any manoeuvre, those responsible for the movement devise".

The report further paid a glowing tribute to the large-scale participation of women in the civil disobedience movement. There was no doubt that "but for them the movement would never" have gained the force it had gathered. The Indian woman was then struggling for domestic and national liberty; and was responsible for "arousing that unexpected support from among practically all educated Hindus throughout the province". This unusual tribute coming from the highest police official of the U.P. was due to the great influence of Mahatma Gandhi and to the detailed instructions issued by the U.P. Satyagraha Committee, under the presidentship of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Wherever he went, there were shouts of *Gandhi Ki Jai* and *Bande Matram.*

Dodd in his report had repeatedly mentioned that, when he passed through Kanpur again, there was ample evidence of Congress influence. Practically all *ekkas* carried national flags. Of all the places visited by him, the finest display of flags was seen by him in Unnao, a nearby district of Kanpur. This was the off-shoot of the National Week celebrated in Kanpur, with great enthusiasm.

Prisoners' Aid Society

When Government did not release political prisoners by 31 December, an organization known as U.P. Political Workers' Family Aid Society was formed at the *Pratap* office. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had become its secretary. Realising the hardships that family members of the prisoners might face, he issued an appeal for funds. Persons sympathetic to the cause could enrol as members of the Aid Society on payment of rupees six per annum. However, members, whose income exceeded rupees six hundred per annum, could donate ten per cent of their income, upto a maximum of Rs. 300/- per annum. The governing body of the Aid Society included Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and eight others. Dr. Kailash Nath Katju became its treasurer. By May 1930 over 106 members had been enrolled and subscriptions collected to the tune of Rs. 522/-. At an important meeting held on 23 May 1930 at Allahabad, the U.P. Congress Executive Committee decided to raise a fund of rupees one lakh for carrying on Congress work in the province. A small committee consisting of the president, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Shiva Prasad Gupta and Krishna Kant Malaviya, was appointed to make collections. The money was to be spent on various purposes including the welfare of political sufferers.

Arrest and Jail Life

Having piloted the *satyagraha* successfully throughout U.P. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was arrested on 25 May 1930, in the morning at the Queen's Memorial Gardens. He was charged under Section 117, Indian Penal Code, and the same day he was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. As soon as the news of his arrest reached the public, the principal bazaars were closed and hartal observed. About 4.00 p.m. a procession was taken out which terminated at Shradhanand Park where speeches were delivered on the political situation. A peaceful

and calm atmosphere prevailed as desired by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Mohan Lal Saksena and others filed appeal in the High Court and got their sentences reduced. But Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, when requested to file an appeal, refused to oblige his friends and admirers. He regarded it as derogatory to his self-respect and sense of pride as a *satyagrahi*.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was very frank and considerate with his children. Despite hardships and adverse circumstances he kept them in good cheer. The letter he wrote to his daughter, from the jail, throws light on his family life. It states that she should convey to her mother that the latter need not worry about him, he was getting on well in jail. His health was also good, and she should not worry on that account. With God's blessings he hoped to return home from the prison, hale and hearty. He further wrote,"... ...the sufferings they were undergoing at that time, were akin to those which thousands of other families were also passing through. They were all performing an act of faith". According to him all such people should console themselves with the thought that whatever difficulties they were facing, were not an act of villainy. Due to their sacrifices, God was certain to benefit all. After such evil days, cheerful ones would follow. All should have "faith in God and religion".

In another letter he gave a description of his life in the jail. Due to the rains all prisoners were put to trouble as they had to remain confined to the barracks. Because of rains, they could not take a stroll in the compound and were deprived of the privilege allowed to them even in the jail. He compared the life of the prisoners with that of *burqa* clad ladies of well-to-do families.

While Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was in Hardoi jail, the finances of the family worsened. His sons and daughters were studying. There were four daughters, and the eldest was of marriageable age. His wife was mostly on sick bed. Old mother was languishing. But Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, as a great

freedom fighter, had plunged with others into the *satyagraha* movement.

On 25 January, the Viceroy unconditionally released Mahatma Gandhi as well as members of the Congress Working Committee. By 26 January all members, including interim ones, were set free. During February prolonged negotiations took place between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy. As a result, a 21-point programme, commonly known as Gandhi-Irwin Pact, was signed on 5 March. One of the main points of the Pact was withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement and release of all Civil Disobedience Movement prisoners.

Consequently Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was released on 10 March 1931, although his term of imprisonment was to end on 25 May. After his release from jail, he was accorded a tumultous welcome at Kanpur.

On arrival at Kanpur he learnt that the plenary session of the All India National Congress was scheduled to meet at Karachi in March 1931 under the presidentship of Vallabhbhai Patel. In accordance with the directions of the Working Committee, picketing of foreign cloth was to be intensified, but there was no civil disobedience. Preparations began to send delegates to the Karachi session. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was to go there, but destiny willed otherwise.

X

Tragic End

WHILE THE preparations were afoot for holding the plenary session of the Indian National Congress at Karachi, two other events rocked the whole nation. One of them took place at Allahabad on the morning of 27 February 1931, in which Chandra Sekhar Azad, leader of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, was shot dead in an encounter with the police. The other was execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Shivram Rajguru at Lahore on 23 March 1931, despite countrywide protests and appeal for clemency. They became martyrs for the cause of India's freedom.

The execution of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues sent a wave of indignation all over the country. The three heroes ascended the scaffold smilingly. They were the proud sons of Mother India. They became immortal martyrs. Bhagat Singh was applauded the most. Hundreds of poems were written in his honour, he was the lion-hearted hero who frenzied for freedom. He upheld the honour of the country at the cost of his life. It was decided to observe *hartal* all over the country. The Indian National Congress at Karachi passed a resolution placing on record "its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of the late Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades Sriyuts Sukhdev and Rajguru" and grieved with the bereaved families the loss of their lives. In its opinion the triple execution was an act of wanton vengeance and was a deliberate flouting of the unanimous demand of the nation for commutation.

Hartal at Kanpur

Immediately on the receipt of the tragic news of the executions at Lahore, the town Congress Committee resolved that there would be *hartal* at Kanpur on 24 March. The Hindu shopkeepers closed their shops instantaneously; and some of the Muslim shops were nominally picketed. But due to prevailing tension between the two communities in the city, undesirable elements took advantage of the situation.

According to a written statement filed before the official enquiry committee by Lala Dewan Chand, Principal, D.A.V. College, Kanpur, the disorders that occurred in the afternoon of 24 March were "not due to religious fanaticism, intolerance or bigotry". In his view the two dominant ideas in the collective life of Kanpur were Civil Disobedience Movement and the *Tanzeem*. They were not exactly antagonistic. One was anti-government and the other was anti-Hindu. Hariharnath Shastri also stated before the Congress Enquiry Committee that some of the Muslim leaders' speeches were anti-Congress. The *Tanzeem* volunteers had been active in Kanpur and Lucknow since 12 August 1930. As the authorities remained indifferent to such activities, the observance of *hartal* led to immediate breakdown of law and order.

When tension was mounting and news of the possible execution of Bhagat Singh and others was trickling in, the police authorities became apprehensive and requested Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to stay back at Kanpur and not to go to Karachi. But the authorities did not take strong precautionary measures against undesirable elements. According to the statement of the District Magistrate, Kanpur, made before the Commission of Enquiry he took the *hartal* as an anti-government demonstration. But in his confidential communication to the Commissioner, Allahabad Division, he wrote on 21 March 1931 that "it was possible there would be less anti-government agitation and possibly mere communal trouble on account of the bad

feeling created by the riots in Banaras, Mirzapur and Agra". Despite such precedents, the district authorities only banked upon the Congressmen and their leaders to control the situation which they themselves created due to the Lahore executions.

Recounting the immediate causes of the riots that followed observance of *hartal* the Commission of Enquiry recorded that on 24 March, in the afternoon, when trouble started at about 1.30 p.m. and disorder as well as conflict arose, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, the most prominent of all the Congress leaders, who happened to pass that way, saw looting of shops and tried to stop that. The District Magistrate, on hearing of the news of rioting down Meston Road way, only despatched two deputy magistrates to the spot. But by the time the frenzy of the mob had considerably increased. The Meston Road temple and the Chauk Bazaza mosque had both been set on fire about this time, despite the magistrates being on duty. The situation grew worse between 4 and 5.00 p.m. on 24 March. Small parties collected in the lanes and rioting in a big way began at the Meston Road. In the morning of 25 March, terrible atrocities were committed in the Bengali Mohal at a comparatively short distance from Meston Road. When the news of this was conveyed to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, he hurried to the spot.

Lone Figure

Despite heavy odds, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, having stayed back from the Congress session at Karachi, stood up. He was the only person who could command some moral authority and exercise some restraining influence, on both Hindus and Muslims. Although risks were involved he remained firm and fearless in the performance of his duty. This is corroborated by a letter written by him, probably his last, to a young lady in reply to a letter from her, offering assistance in establishing peace. He wrote in the forenoon of 25 March 1931 from the *Pratap* office:

"Honoured Sister,

My respectful *namaskars!* I remember you well. I think I saw you in Calcutta ten years back. You were very young then. The condition of the city is undoubtedly very bad. We are trying for peace. Your desire to work for peace even at the sacrifice of your life is very praiseworthy. But at the present I cannot ask you to come out. Not one of the Muslim leaders is stepping forward. *The attitude of the police is very condemnable.....*"

According to him, had the police acted firmly and given him a little help, the riot would have subsided on 24 March, but the authorities wanted the people to settle among themselves. So they stood by, watching unconcerned, while temples and mosques were burnt, people beaten and shops looted. He was categorical that he had seen the indifference of the police with his own eyes. Under such circumstances he was fully justified in advising the lady not to come forward, but he should have taken care of himself also.

Iqbal Krishna Kapoor, who described the closing scenes, before the enquiry committee, confirmed that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was thoroughly disgusted with the behaviour of the police on 24 March. The local officials, although unable to restore confidence themselves, were reluctant to take Congressmen's help to stem the tide of loot and arson. The City Kotwal was equally dilly-dallying. Even when the Superintendent of Police was apprised of the situation, he did not believe in the complaints against the behaviour of the police. The instance of 1927 riots was also cited when Munro, the District Magistrate, had made arrests in the very beginning, but Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's pleadings in March 1931 went unheaded.

The same sorry tale was narrated by Taqi Ahmad, Deputy Collector, who accompanied by only a few constables arrived on the spot. By that time the situation had worsened in the Etawah Bazaar. When Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi reached that spot, he discovered that a Hindu, aged about thirty, had pro-

tected the lives of about thirty Muslim men, women and children from the madness of the rioters. He was then requested by Kanahya Lal to rush to the rescue of Hindus in certain Muslim quarters. But he stayed back in Etawah Bazaar and gave priority to transportation of victims by lorry to a hospital. Although the Deputy Collector on duty promised to provide armed escort, yet at the time of departure he could not keep his promise. The victims had to be transported without escort.

In the meantime, the crowd from Etawah Bazaar had moved towards Bengali Mohal and perpetrated the most horrible atrocities there. When Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi reached there, he started rescuing victims from the houses that had been set on fire. The rescued Muslims were sent to Misri Bazaar and Ram Narain Bazaar and were looked after. According to an eye-witness account when the rescue lorry had left Naya Chowk, Ganesh Shankar met the rowdies. When he reached Chaubey Gola, after passing through Misri Bazaar and Machchli Bazaar, even the two constables accompanying him returned towards Naya Chowk. He was then left with only a few volunteers. Even the person in the lorry transporting the victims was shot at and injured, so he could not accompany him. Then Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi proceeded all alone to the riot-stricken area.

From all available accounts Madho Prasad was the only eye-witness who was with Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi till the end. According to his record of experiences on 25 March, he had gone to Chaubey Gola by 3 or 4.00 p.m. The place was somewhere near the mosque on the Meston Road, and the conditions in the lane were horrible. A large crowd had gathered on Nai Sarak, and some volunteers requested him to address the crowd. According to the findings of the Congress Enquiry Committee report, "there were two hundred Musalmans, Chunni Khan, Khalifa in the Akhara of Bhakku Pahalwan, and five or seven other prominent Musalmans shook hands with him and embraced him". Thereafter Chunni Khan and his companions took him away to another trouble spot. From Chaubey Gola

they too parted company. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was then left alone to face the mob.

What happened thereafter was narrated before the Enquiry Committee by another eye-witness, Ganpat Singh. According to him, in the act of saving the riot victims, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was trapped in the midst of two crowds, one from Makar Mandi side and the other from Naya Chowk. It was here that some people started attacking him with *lathis*. At the instance of one Muslim volunteer, he was spared as he had saved hundreds of Muslims. But soon after, another crowd attacked him. When some people started dragging him to a lane, he said that he won't run away. As he had to die one day, he would prefer to die, while doing his duty. But his noble words had no effect on the assassins who attacked him from all sides. One of his companions died on the spot. Another volunteer was stabbed with a knife. Last came his turn and as the assassin approached him. he bowed his head down only to be mowed down. He was then stabbed in the back and another man attacked him with a *khanta* (an axe). He fell down and the eye-witness fled to Naya Chowk. The time of this fatal incident occurred probably at 4.00 p.m. and the wounded saviour of riot victims lay on the ground unattended. As to when his body was removed to what place on that fatal night, could not be ascertained by the Commissions of Enquiry. Frantic search was made for his body, but the same could not be traced till late in the night. People talked about his having been seen near Chaubey Gola and thereafter his whereabouts were not known. The attack on him at Chaubey Gola was also confirmed by Maulana Khizr Muhammad who deposed before the enquiry committee.

According to his version, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had left his house abruptly at 9.00 a.m. or so, bareheaded and barefooted. He was all the time frantically appealing to Muslims and Hindus to desist from killing one another. His was the lone figure trying to control the frenzied mobs. The two constables and the Deputy Collector had already parted company. Even

the last few volunteers disappeared when the fatal moment came. He was thus left alone to die.

Two days later, his dead body was found lying stuffed in a gunny bag in a hospital. Though his face had been badly disfigured, he could be identified due to his white *khadi* clothes. His identity was further confirmed by the three letters found in his pocket which he had scribbled on the fateful morning of 25 March. According to Dev Vrat Sastri, his distinctive style of hair and the word *GAJENDRA* engraved on his arm proved decisive in the identification of his dead body. Shiva Narain Misra and Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohatgi took charge of the dead body. With the arrival of Purshottam Das Tandon and Bal Krishna Sharma from Karachi Congress, the cremation could take place at 7.30 a.m. on 29 March 1931. Thus ended the life of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi at the age of only fortyone years. Due to the prevailing communal tension in the city, most of his admirers could not pay him their last homage.

Echo in U.P. Legislative Council

The fatal incident was raised in the Council through a notice of an adjournment motion on 30 March 1931 to discuss the communal riots at Banaras, Agra, Mirzapur and Kanpur. The Finance Member had already given statements on 25 and 26 March. The U.P. Government held the Congress responsible for the riots because of its enforcing the *hartal* even on the Muslim shopkeepers in connection with the Lahore executions. According to the official version, the troops had been called to assist the local authorities to maintain law and order in the city. However, the Finance Member admitted in his 26 March statement that despite reinforcements "the rioting continued during the day, yesterday (i.e. 25 March)". Although casualties were mentioned on both the days, no mention was made of the gruesome murder of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in the House although he was at one time its member.

As the matter had also been raised in the Legislative Assembly, the Government of India asked for reports from the U.P. Government. In reply to the telegram from Home Department, the Chief Secretary Jagdish Prasad sent a D.O. letter with copies of the statements by the Finance Member. But the Government of India was not impressed with the reports. It was specifically pointed out to the Governor of U.P. Sir George Lambert by Emerson "that there was a good deal to be said for each side of the case". It anticipated that the non-official Committee of enquiry appointed by the Indian National Congress with Dr. Bhagwan Das as chairman, would blame the Government of inadequate action. In such circumstances, Sir James Crerar, Home Member, said that holding an enquiry at the earliest was necessary.

Consequently a Commission of Enquiry was appointed by U.P. Government under the presidentship of Mr. Keane on 19 April 1931 to inquire into and report on the predisposing and immediate causes of the communal outbreak at Kanpur from 24 March, its course from day to day and how it was dealt with at each stage by the local authorities, with findings on the inadequacy of measures taken.

Indifferent Authorities

The Commission of Enquiry recorded that on the morning of 25 March, "the intensity of rioting, including murders, arson and lootings increased". According to its findings, it was on the afternoon of that day that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was killed while engaged in rescue work and "he deserved the highest praise for his selfless devotion during the riots and the fearless manner in which he met his death succouring the distressed. This was indeed in keeping with his known character".

There was general feeling that the indifferent attitude of the District Magistrate, J.F. Sale, was responsible for the inadequacy of the security arrangements that resulted in the tragic death of

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The findings of the Commission of Enquiry reveal that, even when rioting had spread and loot as well as arson was going on, the District Magistrate felt that "the rioting was all of the burn and run or stab and run type", and the rioters invariably ran away as fast as they could when any troops or police appeared, into the narrow side-lanes amid a labyrinth of houses".

So they could not be caught or even traced out. In short, it is evident from the report that the authorities felt that arrests could not be made as the forces at their disposal were inadequate. But at the same time it is surprising that the authorities fondly hoped that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and his unarmed volunteers could stem the tide of loot, arson and rioting. Even they could not provide escorts for the injured to be transported to hospitals. It was due to the callous indifference of the authorities that, even after his murder, his body could not be traced for two days.

As for the *hartal* and picketing of Muslim shops, the District Magistrate admitted in his statement before the Commission of Enquiry that "the Town Congress Committee had usually shown a marked tendency to *placate the Muslims and avoid giving them offence*". It is difficult to imagine that on 24 March the Congressmen would force the Muslim shopkeepers to such an extent that looting and arson would begin. In any case if he apprehended danger to law and order, he could make preventive arrests of undesirable elements of both the communities, but he did nothing of the sort.

In the Legislative Assembly when the then Home Secretary, M.W. Emerson tried to defend the local authorities, C.S. Ranga Iyer cornered him on the point of delay in calling the troops to restore law and order in the city. Emerson asserted that "some of the troops in Cawnpore were however called out, and early in the morning of 25 March, when it appeared that the trouble was likely to assume more serious dimensions, aid was at once re-

quisitioned from Lucknow". But in actuality the troops from Lucknow could reach Kanpur only in the evening and by that time the worst had happened. Thereafter orders were issued for requisitioning troops from other districts also. Emerson also failed to explain why the police did not resort to firing to control the riotous mobs. C.S. Ranga Iyer once again asserted that there seemed to be more need of martial law in Kanpur than in Sholapur. He openly exclaimed in the House that Emerson was trying to belittle the situation in Kanpur because Indians had been victims and not Europeans.

In the words of Ranga Iyer the most shocking thing in Kanpur was that "there were rescue parties, and in one party perished one of my dearest friends, Vidyarthi, a man who was a friend of the Hindu, a friend of the Muslim, a friend of every community, except perhaps the police community, except perhaps the Government community, whom he had time in and time out, enraged both by his newspaper articles and by his Gandhian propaganda". The speaker went to accuse the Government of having let down a rescuer, who was protecting from the hands of hooligans, unfortunate families, men, women and children. The police watched on and even withdrew from the scene. Such a thing was unheard of in any part of the world. According to him the death of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi occurred due to the grave dereliction of duty on the part of the local police.

Even Arthur Moore, the renowned editor, while opposing Ranga Iyer's allegations, conceded that what the authorities did in the first half of April 1931, by strengthening the garrison at Kanpur by two companies of British troops, could have been done earlier too. Detachments from the special armed police force, if rushed earlier, could have averted the tragedy on 25 March afternoon.

The Bhagwan Das Committee appointed by the Congress laid bare facts which substantiated the above allegations. The Committee, on the basis of replies to its questionnaire concluded

that "the Collector, the Commissioner, some European men and women, and certain sections of *goondas* in the city knew that it (Hindu-Muslim riot) was coming". The Committee further observed that the District Magistrate, instead of cooperating with the Congress leaders non-cooperated and his complacency as well as tardiness cost the life of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. The British toops, when called, were first deployed in Civil Lines where mostly Europeans lived. Some of them, who were posted in the main bazaar, broke open liquor shops and looted them.

Even on the restoration of normalcy, the local authorities could not enjoy the lost confidence. It was only when the Congress leaders made an appeal, addressed meetings and went in procession through the main roads that the people could be persuaded to open shops. The efforts of the *Unity Board* and the visit of Sardar Patel yielded fruit only by 6 April. In actuality, it was the supreme sacrifice and martyrdom of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi that ultimately succeeded in healing the wounds of the two communities.

The chairman of the non-official enquiry committee, Dr. Bhagwan Das, in his letter to the President of the A.I.C.C., Delhi, dated 26 October wrote that "many of the Cawnpore Congress workers were not able to rise to that high level of being superior to all orthodoxy, and of leaving all mankind utterly irrespective of creed, which was attained by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, and was illustrated by him in that supreme self-sacrifice". Purshottam Das Tandon, who did not agree with the above regarding Congressmen of Kanpur held that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was produced from amongst Kanpur Congressmen and was the best representative of a group of workers capable of making best sacrifices in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity.

The motive behind the behaviour of Government officials "was definitely to punish the businessmen of Kanpur, because they had supported the Congress party and in order to show the helplessness of India in respect of Hindu-Muslim questions and the imperative need of a third party to maintain order".

Negligence on the part of officers at Kanpur resulted in the unprecedented calamity and the tragic end of such a noble soul as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Had the U.P. Government taken prompt measures, preventive ones included, had it provided adequate security men to those who were rescuing the victims of undesirable elements, had it reinforced the local police in time, the death of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and the aftermath of that, would have been averted. Report or no report the facts speak of the events by themselves. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's tragic death could have been easily averted had he been given armed escort and adequate preventive measures taken to stop loot and arson.

XI

Martyr for Communal Amity

MAHATMA GANDHI wrote in *Young India*, dated 2 April 1931, "I am grieved to have to inform you that Syt. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi is reported to be missing or killed. Who would not be grieved over the death of such a genuine and earnest selfless comrade? ... It was therefore fortunate that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was so eminently free from communal bias, who was an institution in himself, and who was the fore-runner worker of the place, should have laid down his life in the cause of peace. Let his great example be an inspiration to us all, let us awaken to our sense of duty...Let the shame of Kanpur teach us a lesson, so that we may feel that even the loss of 300 men and women was not so high a price to be paid for permanent peace." He thus set the highest example of non-violent sacrifice.

In an earlier telegram to Bal Krishna Sharma, editor of the *Partap* (Kanpur), Gandhiji wrote, "Though heart bleeds, I refuse to send condolence over a death so magnificent as Ganesh Shankar's. It may not do so today but his innocent blood is bound some day to cement Hindus and Musalmans. His family therefore deserves no condolence but congratulations. May his example prove infectious!" On other occasions Mahatma Gandhi queried why the country had not produced another Ganesh Shankar. Whenever he remembered him he felt jealous of him. He wished he could also get that type of opportunity to sacrifice.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech at the All-India Students Convention at Karachi on 27 March 1931 also paid equally handsome tribute to him, when he said, "It is reported that one of my dear friends, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, president

of U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, has been killed in the course of rioting. Like the true brave Congressmen that he was, he must have rushed to the point of danger and tried to pacify the people who were killing each other. If he has met the death in this manner, it is as a true Indian should meet it."

The *Tribune* (Lahore), dated 10 June 1931, carried the following passage about Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, "Whatever may be said regarding the causes of the outbreak, Mr. Vidyarthi deserves the highest praise for his selfless devotion during the riots and the fearless manner in which he met his death, succouring the distress. This was in keeping with his known character."

The Indian National Congress at its Karachi session in March 1931, also expressed shock and deep grief at the news of the death of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was acclaimed, as "one of the most selfless among national workers and who by his freedom from communal bias had endeared himself to all parties and communities".

Glowing tributes were paid to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi by most of the witnesses, who deposed before the enquiry committee. One of the leading merchants of the Muslim community remarked, "He was one who could be counted amongst angels. He was an ornament not only of the Hindu but also of the Musalman community. He was universally acclaimed as humaneness personified, embodiment of social morality, standard-bearer of unity, whom the enemies of humanity snatched away in the prime of life."

Speaking on the motion for adjournment to discuss the Kanpur riots, Lala Rameshwar Prasad Bagla and several other members of the Legislative Assembly condemned the local authorities' laxity in affording protection to such a noble worker. Bhai Parmanand exclaimed that Vidyarthi was the deadly enemy of communalism. He always stood for Hindu-Muslim unity and offered himself for being killed. He died for a noble cause and

thus joined the ranks of the martyrs, who did yeoman's service to humanity and universal brotherhood.

According to an eye-witness account of a European published in the *Times of India* dated 2 April 1931, when hate and murder held high in Kanpur, there was one redeeming feature, i.e. "the heroic work of Mr. Vidyarthi the Congress M.L.C. who in the end fell a victim to his utterly fearless labours". He went time and again into the Mahomedan quarters, unarmed and barefoot. As no police was available to protect him, he had as companions two Congress boys, but on his last expedition be went alone—an example of supreme courage and devotion to duty which the public surely would not fail to communicate. His was a rare example of heroism acclaimed by all Indians and Europeans alike.

C.Y. Chintamani, paying tribute to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, in the U.P. Legislative Council, of which he was also a member from 1926 to 1929, said, he knew him for many years and as a man of great ability but still more of rare public spirit. He knew him as one, whose entire life was given up in a spirit of abregation in the service of his countrymen, and that he should have passed away so young in years and with so much promise still unfulfilled was a tragedy. Another member of the Council, Thakur Balwant Singh said that Vidyarthi possessed patriotism of the highest order and he died in trying to restore Hindu-Muslim unity. The best homage that could be paid to his memory, would be to establish on a firm and secure basis communal harmony and unity. To this end was established the *Hindustani Biradari* which exists even today.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali said that Vidyarthi, who died a tragic death, was an important and prominent member of the last Council and all of them held him in high regard and esteem. The Nawab of Chattari, Home Member, remarked that he knew him as a real nationalist and far above communalism. Member after member rose in the then U.P. Legislative Council

to pay tribute to him, as he was one of the most ardent and vociferous members of the Council.

Among other tributes, he was acclaimed as a true believer of the Congress creed, a great patriot, an incarnation of peace and non-violence who heroically sacrificed his precious life for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and maintenance of peace. In him India lost a selfless patriot, Musalmans lost a great friend and Kanpur its uncrowned king. Vidyarthi's selfless devotion, unrivalled patriotism and his burning love for India is enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen.

The *Leader* (Allahabad), dated 3 April 1931 carried the following poem about *Patriot's Dream* by T.J. Vaswani:

I woke this morn
With a song in my heart
Like the breeze in you free;
It said—the Dream will yet come true.
For God's dreams are Deeds
And India's dream of Liberty is HIS.
Where is the way to victory ? I asked
And there is the healing message
I heard in my heart—
Siva's way—the way of the Cross !
The way of the broken bleeding ones
The way of the MARTYRED men !
The way of the Immortals
Who give to God
The red flower
Of Anguished aspirations
And the simple worship
Of silent Sacrifice !

Every word of the above poem was true about the great martyr.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi thus fought to his utmost to kill the die-hard communalism. He died as a true nationalist and

patriot. His unparalleled noble sacrifice served as an eye-opener to his countrymen in 1931, and should serve in future also.

The Kanpur Municipal Board also paid tribute to him with the hope that his innocent blood would serve as a cement to bind the two communities for which cause he sacrificed his life. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant wrote to Sunderlal that the loss of Vidyarthi was irreparable. He was "a friend so sweet, so noble, so selfless, one cannot imagine". In the words of Jwaladutt Sharma, another admirer, he was humane above all. He was simple, kind-hearted and unassuming. In the words of Pandit Nehru he attained the eternal joy in the noble sacrifice.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was humble to the core. He was always simple dressed. He mostly put on *dhoti* and over that a long coat. When Gandhiji's influence dominated, he started wearing only a white *kurta* with Gandhi cap on. The only addition was a *dupatta*, commonly known after Madan Mohan Malaviya. It was always an attractive combination. Whenever he burst into laughter, he captivated everybody present. He always greeted his visitors and friends with *Vande* short form of *Vandematram*, the national song.

In the words of Banarsidas Chaturvedi, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was unassuming in his manners, with a heart that keenly felt for the poor and a face that spoke of long suffering and transparent sincerity. The personality of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had a peculiar charm of his own.

Having no axe of his own to grind, with an ambition of only serving the poor, he possessed an indomitable courage, ever ready to oppose tyranny and injustice from whatever quarter that might have been—the capitalists, the Government or the mob. He was a fighting editor of the *Pratap* (Kanpur) and thus represented the powerful journalism of the future India. He was jestful and humorous, but when sarcastic, he cut to the core. He was quick to retort, but never hurt anybody. He was lovable

and respected for his unostentatious behaviour and magnetic personality. He was frail, lean and thin, but had the strength of a giant. Within a short span of his life he rose to be an all-India leader.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as a writer had the vibrant heart of a poet and his pen-portraits of the poor and the downtrodden moved his readers to the core of their hearts. Although he was tolerant by nature, he was unsparing to the corrupt. And when after his relentless fight in a contempt case, he was made to pay a fine of rupees four hundred, his article entitled *On the Path of Sacrifice*, (The *Pratap*, dated 21 November 1926) is the finest example of his self-mortification and challenging words even to the Almighty. The occasion for writing that was the mortification he suffered in the unjust punishment awarded to him in Mainpuri Contempt Case. He wrote, "Ye ! God ! How thorny is the path and how rickety is the road leading to Your door? Why have You interposed such a thorny road between me, devoted to the path of Your LOVE, and Your palatial abode? Whence have You become such a cruel assayer of Your devotees?" He further eulogised, "The path of sacrifice is no doubt very difficult. If someone eagerly advances towards You, You silently show the path of thorns." According to him human-beings aspiring to have a glimpse of such an idol, did not complain to the effect, that the Supreme Being kept himself on the other side of that difficult, painful and thorny path. However, his devotees welcomed such difficult situations, rebukes, physical troubles and mental afflictions as gifts from the Almighty. "The life of such crazy devotees," in the words of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, "was akin to consigned flowers, wreaths or floral offerings."

He went still further and enquired from the Almighty as to what pleasure did He derive by putting the devotees on trial or under severe tests. It was heartening to note that those, who determined to tread the path towards Him, became so crazy and so persistent in their determination that they forgot their self. Despite all difficulties the devotee aspired for His glimpses and

entry into His Durbar. And he only wished that he could die or sacrifice for such a coquetry or blendishment of His. He looked upon the Almighty as One, pulsating in the cries of the oppressed, the agony of the afflicted and the misery of the downtrodden. He was visible in the vacant looks of the millions who were ransacked and travellers on a thorny path.

According to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi the Almighty resided in the midst of the poor, oppressed and exploited mass of the people. His feet were entrenched in such places, where the so-called dredges of the society resided; and it seemed to him that He summoned the devotees also to such places of worship. He was unable to describe the splendour of such abodes. In his view there was on the one hand garland of shoes, kicks and even whips; but on the other hand there was a water channel of the tears of the skeleton-like human-beings. On the one side there was a heartrending cry of an infant separated from the mother doing *begar*; while on the other there was agony of those whose everything had been snatched away by the tyrant. Life was just clinging to skeletons at one place and at another there were under-nourished and half-starved children wrapped in rags. It is strange that the Lord, the Almighty had entrenched Him-self in the midst of atrocities, tyranny, forceful exactions, pain, misery, cruelty and animal behaviour.

Howsoever depressed the mind of the human-being might have become, in the words of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, all the world was of the Almighty. From time immemorial, it had been the practice that His devotees had passed their lives in poverty, troubles and sacrifice. The Almighty knew everything. He was onmipotent, so the devotee had nothing to fear. For him it was only to do and die. Sacrifice was the ultimate object for the devotee.

According to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi the defiant soul was forced to bear the agony. His only fault was that he had raised his voice against injustice, atrocity and tyranny. Another crime

of his was that he had extended his helping hand to the tortured and the dying. There was anguish in the cry of the oppressed. For the devotee there was an appeal and demand for the performance of his duty. He performed his duty. He died for a cause, and thus joined the imposing galaxy of martyrs. He pined for sacrificing his life for a noble cause, and he did get that opportunity.

APPENDIX 'A'

"Pratap"
A Hindi Weekly

Pratap Office
Cawnpore 26-10-1919

The Judge
The Sessions Court
Mainpuri

Sir,

The bearer, Mr. Siv Charan Lal Sharma is a special correspondent of our paper, the *Pratap* and is being sent to your court to take reports of the Sedition Case. We shall be highly obliged if you would please allow him the facilities which are usually allowed to reporters under such circumstances.

We have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

Sd. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi
Editor, the Pratap

Mainpuri Conspiracy Case files, U.P. State Archives, Lucknow.

APPENDIX 'B'

Extracts from Kanpur Riots Enquiry Report, 1931

Para 72.

The inactivity of the police is further illustrated by the very small number of arrests made at the beginning. On the 24th, there was only one, and on the 25th, only five with the exception of those made in a special raid by a Deputy Superintendent of Police in Colonelganj and on the 26th only two persons were arrested. These figures indicate either inactivity or that no importance was attached to the making of arrests as means of checking the riots. More than one Deputy Magistrate has told us that no serious effort was made to enforce the orders under section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure before 27th.

The failure to make arrests and enforce those orders must have given the bad characters an idea that they were free to do so as they liked; and of this opportunity they took full advantage. The policy of making arrests on a large scale at an early stage proved very effective in the 1927 riot.

Sd. M. Keane
G.O. Allen
Balram Ram Dave
Liaqut Ali Khan

Sd. at Nainital
May 22, 1931

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